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Chairperson: Ms. Ogwu (Nigeria)
later: Mr. Metelitsa (Vice-Chairperson) (Belarus)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 49: Sustainable development (A/63/66, A/63/76-E/2008/54 and A/63/225)

- (a) **Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development** (A/63/304; A/C.2/63/3)
- (b) **Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States** (A/63/296 and A/63/297)
- (c) **International Strategy for Disaster Reduction** (A/63/347 and A/63/351)
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- (e) **Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa** (A/63/294; A/C.2/63/3)
- (f) **Convention on Biological Diversity** (A/63/294; A/C.2/63/3)
- (g) **Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its tenth special session** (A/63/25)

1. **Mr. Sha Zukang** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/63/304), said that the interrelation between the economic, social and natural worlds underpinned the three-pillar framework of sustainable development; consequently, a holistic strategy should be implemented in order to grow the global economy, address social inequities and protect the ecosystems. Unsustainable production and consumption were eroding natural stocks of wealth and the challenge posed to the global development agenda was as daunting and urgent as that caused by the financial crisis.

2. Many developing countries were struggling to address the macroeconomic fallout of high domestic food prices and inflationary pressure, and the challenge facing Africa was especially serious. The food crisis epitomized the failure of the international community on several interrelated fronts; it had failed to protect land and water, to invest in agriculture and agricultural research, and to empower women, especially women farmers. The Secretary-General had reacted promptly by creating a High-level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis to coordinate the short- and long-term actions of the United Nations and the Secretariat looked forward to guidance from the General Assembly on the complex negotiations for policy decisions at the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

3. In summary, the main themes of the report of the Secretary-General were the interconnectedness of the world and the need for integrated solutions to the challenges that lay ahead, with broad participation in implementation, and a more robust global partnership for development.

4. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/63/296) and the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations" (A/63/297), he said that, in the case of the small island developing States, the report stressed the urgency of providing increased financial and capacity-building support, owing to their vulnerability to the impact of climate change as well as to natural disasters and the vicissitudes of the global markets.

5. **Sir John Holmes** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/63/351), said that the report provided an overview of progress in implementing disaster risk reduction and the Hyogo Framework for Action at the national, regional and international levels over the past 12 months. Although good progress had been made on a variety of fronts, the world was not on track to achieve the sought-after outcome of the Hyogo Framework, which was a substantial reduction of disaster losses by

2015; therefore, a major scaling-up of efforts and resources was needed urgently.

6. Some of the key points of the report were the escalating impact of disasters in terms of the loss of lives, properties and livelihoods owing to unsound development practices. Multiple events made those affected doubly vulnerable in the face of each new disaster and recalled the fundamental importance of disaster risk reduction, particularly the need for early warning systems and disaster-resistant construction.

7. A crucial element for the future was to ensure synergy between the disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation agendas. The recent Ministerial Meeting convened by the Secretary-General on reducing disaster risk in a changing climate had provided clear evidence of increased collective commitment to accelerate the implementation of disaster risk reduction and to find innovative, robust solutions to the increasing disaster risks created by a rapidly changing climate.

8. The challenge was to translate the commitment into concrete action at all levels. Government entities responsible for climate change policy and for disaster risk reduction needed to coordinate the use of funds and resources. Member States were encouraged to prepare national adaptation plans drawing on the Hyogo Framework and to consider setting targets for public spending on multi-year local and national disaster risk reduction programmes.

9. Much useful progress had been made in disaster risk reduction, but much remained to be done. The risks and solutions were known, so failure to invest and to act decisively was a dereliction of duty to future generations. The devastation caused in Gonaïves, Haiti, by the onslaught of four successive hurricanes or tropical storms, provided a persuasive illustration of the crying need for disaster risk reduction measures.

10. **Mr. de Boer** (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), introducing his report on the thirteenth session of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the third session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (A/63/294, chapter I), said that the Bali sessions had achieved an important political breakthrough with the Bali Road Map. The Map included ongoing work related to adaptation, technology transfer and financing of climate change

action, as well as actions to be completed by the end of 2009 for adoption at the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.

11. The negotiations had progressed in 2008 by gathering ideas and proposals and clarifying positions on many issues. At the most recent negotiating session in Accra, Ghana, in August, the Parties had requested the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action under the Convention to compile proposals for presentation at Poznań, to serve as a preliminary version of a negotiating text. Three political essentials had to be met for an ambitious agreement to be reached in Copenhagen: clarity concerning the nature of commitments, the means of mobilizing financial resources, and the necessary institutional arrangements.

12. Given the limited time before the Copenhagen Conference, it was critical that the Climate Change Conference in Poznań deliver concrete results. Ministers would need to focus on arriving at a shared vision for long-term cooperative action that would translate into positive political guidance for the process and advance negotiations significantly. Progress would also be sought with regard to ongoing work on adaptation, technology, capacity-building, and improving the geographical coverage of the clean development mechanism projects.

13. Climate change was a sustainable development issue, closely linked to economic development, finance, energy and agriculture, and should be addressed in that context. The current financial crisis did not justify delaying action, because clean industry and investment had proved that they could offer long-term profits and had the potential to create millions of new jobs. The financial turmoil could actually provide an opportunity to address both the financial and the climate change crises together.

14. **Mr. Djoghlaif** (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity), introducing his report (A/63/294, chap. III), said that it would require an unswerving, collective, long-term effort, as well as a change in approach, to reach the 2010 target of achieving a substantial reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss under Millennium Development Goal 7.

15. The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, which had met in Bonn in May 2008, in many ways epitomized that new

approach to the unprecedented challenges of the loss of biodiversity compounded by the potential impact of climate change. The decisions adopted ushered in a new era of enhanced commitment to and implementation of the three objectives of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. In addition, the Bonn meeting had adopted a gender action plan in recognition of the vital link between women, poverty and biodiversity.

16. He hoped that, at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in Nagoya in 2010, universal participation in the Convention would be achieved with the accession of the three remaining countries. Lastly, he urged the Second Committee to give impetus to the decisions adopted at the Bonn meeting and energize the United Nations system to collaborate for the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010.

17. **Mr. Gnacadja** (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa) said that, during his first year in office, he had undertaken a series of reforms aimed at the effective implementation of the ten-year strategic plan and framework (2008-2018) adopted at the eighth session of the Conference of Parties held in Madrid in 2007. He had taken pains to emphasize that the Convention was the only multilateral environmental agreement on land and soil degradation and that countries must be helped to adapt to climate change. Political commitments on mitigating the effects of climate change must be translated into practical and substantial action.

18. Another priority had been to strengthen the role of science and technology in the work of the Convention, and to identify voices that would carry the message of the Convention loud and clear. Land degradation was taking place in Europe, Asia and Central America but Africa's situation remained the worst. By 2050, half the world's arable land would no longer be productive as a result of desertification. Over many decades, mankind had created a vicious circle: the degradation of the atmosphere caused the degradation of the land, and vice versa. The challenge was to tackle land degradation and climate change as a single problem. For example, organically managed soils could convert carbon dioxide from a greenhouse gas into a food-producing asset. Soils contained more carbon than was found in vegetation and the

atmosphere combined. Decision makers at all levels should pay due attention to land.

19. The note by the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Convention, contained in chapter II of document A/63/294, provided an update of activities under the Convention since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 62/193. Most related to the implementation of the ten-year strategy at the corporate and policymaking levels.

20. At the corporate level, he had been authorized, at the extraordinary session of the Conference of the Parties held at Headquarters in November 2007, to realign the programmes and staffing structure of the secretariat in order to facilitate the implementation of the strategy. Four substantive units had been established, coordinated by the executive direction and management unit and supported by conference and administrative services. The secretariat had also started the preparation of its multi-year strategic workplan and a costed biennial work programme, following a results-based management approach, in October 2007. The result of that process appeared in the draft four-year strategic plan, which dealt with policy, and the draft two-year operational plan, which set out the secretariat's work in more detail. The reforms aimed to enhance the secretariat's responsiveness to the needs of States parties and to upgrade its analytical and knowledge-brokering functions by encouraging coalition-building and system-wide cooperation to deliver the objectives of the strategy. They also aimed to find improved ways of dealing with emerging issues and developing mechanisms or legislative tools to support sustainable land management. The joint work programme between the global mechanism of the Convention and the secretariat had been completed, the aim being to ensure consistency in the delivery of services and strengthen cooperation at every level.

21. In connection with the fourth objective of the 10-year strategy, the secretariat had started consultations with relevant organizations to foster cooperation in specific areas of competence. One outcome was the memorandum of understanding between the secretariat and the Economic Commission for Africa, signed in March 2008. Given that the Convention had been built on the premise of partnership, similar arrangements with other bodies were under consideration.

22. At the policymaking level, the secretariat had, jointly with the German Government, organized a high-level policy dialogue on the theme "Coping with today's global challenges in the context of the strategy of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification". The dialogue had reaffirmed that the Convention was the systemic and worldwide response to sustainable development challenges affecting land and ecosystems. Issues at the core of the Convention had also been reviewed at the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, as set out in paragraphs 37 to 41, and the need to increase the allocation of financial resources to the Global Environment Facility focal area on land degradation in the next replenishment cycle had been established.

23. Given the intricate relations between climate change, biological diversity, land degradation, drought and desertification, it was essential to find synergies between the three Rio Conventions. As stated in paragraph 35 of the report, the policy was to utilize the ecosystem approach and to implement policies provided for under the three Conventions. The report enumerated a number of practical measures taken to raise public awareness, contribute to the improvement of the global environment and foster strong scientific backing for sustainable policies. The report concluded with three observations and recommendations by the Secretary-General on action that might be taken by the General Assembly.

24. **Mr. El-Habr** (Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for West Asia), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/63/225), recalled that the bombing of the el Jiyeh power plant by Israel in July 2006 had caused great environmental damage. Following assessment studies by United Nations and other international and national agencies, the General Assembly had adopted resolution 61/194, which called on the Government of Israel to assume responsibility for adequate compensation for Lebanon for the repair of environmental damage caused. At the sixty-second session, the Secretary-General had presented a report (A/62/343) and the General Assembly had adopted resolution 62/188, reiterating the concerns expressed in General Assembly resolution 61/194 and calling for a further report.

25. In June 2008, his office had once again taken on the coordination of the United Nations inter-agency task team. Representatives of UNEP, the United

Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) had met to identify progress made, taking into account the contributions of other agencies, including the World Bank. Meetings had been held with the Lebanese Ministry of the Environment and with a committee chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to exchange information and updates on progress achieved.

26. The final paragraph of the report commended the efforts of the Lebanese Government and the United Nations system, urged the Government of Israel to take the necessary action on compensating Lebanon, asked Member States, international organizations, other institutions and the private sector for their continued support for Lebanon and recommended the establishment of the eastern Mediterranean oil spill restoration Fund.

27. *Mr. Metelitsa (Belarus), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

28. **Ms. Castaño** (Director of the UNEP New York Liaison Office), introducing the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its tenth special session (A/63/25), said that crises were often seen through the narrow lens of some immediate concern, such as high food or fuel prices, and not from a broader perspective. Solutions to the more immediate crises, however, must take account of the environment as a whole. That was the very foundation of sustainable development. UNEP had contributed to the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis and the preparation of the Comprehensive Framework for Action on the food crisis. It had also contributed to action on biofuel production, taking into account both human food needs and the sustainable nature of such production. It had joined forces with other agencies and stakeholders to address the challenges of climate change and such related issues as poverty eradication, disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change.

29. The special session, held in Monaco in February 2008, had been attended by 56 States members and 82 non-members of the Governing Council, 23 United Nations bodies, 5 specialized agencies, 10 intergovernmental organizations and 113 non-governmental organizations. She drew attention to the discussions by ministers and heads of delegations,

which appeared in annexes II and III of the report. The discussions had focused on globalization and the environment; the mobilization of finance to meet the climate challenge; international environmental governance; and United Nations reform. The findings of the fourth Global Environment Outlook had provided the special session with up-to-date information on trends in the environment on a global level. Decisions had been adopted on chemicals management, including mercury and waste management; sustainable development of the Arctic region; the Medium-term Strategy for the period 2010-2013; an international decade for addressing climate change; and the Global Environment Outlook: environment for development.

30. The decision on the Medium-term Strategy was of particular significance, since it was central to the reform of UNEP and the efforts to make it a more focused and results-based organization. It would also enable UNEP to attain its objectives under the Bali Strategic Plan on Technology Support and Capacity-building, which would be coordinated through UNEP regional offices. UNEP was building strategic alliances with partners both from within the United Nations family and from civil society and the private sector.

31. **Mr. Blake** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that simultaneous action was needed on all three pillars of sustainable development. A coordinated, integrated and balanced approach was essential.

32. He welcomed the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/63/304). Discussions at the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, held in May 2008, had provided valuable guidance on how to further the implementation of Agenda 21 as it related to the thematic cluster of agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. He hoped that the Commission's seventeenth session, to be held in May 2009, would result in a consensus and action-oriented outcome based on open and inclusive negotiations. Further implementation of Agenda 21 and of the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development required greater emphasis on sustainable consumption and production patterns, led by developed countries, in line with the principle of common but

differentiated responsibilities. Despite the myriad activities undertaken since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002, the fundamental challenges that had been identified remained and, in some cases, had worsened. In that connection, he welcomed Brazil's offer to host a "Rio+20" conference in 2012.

33. Small island developing States were both particularly vulnerable to the vagaries of climate change and unable to address such challenges effectively by themselves. Adequate resources must be allocated to the Small Island Developing States Unit and its website, SIDSNet. The Group supported the efforts of Caribbean States to gain international recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development. The international community should recognize the Sea's importance to the economic well-being and sustenance of people living in the area and assist the countries concerned in taking appropriate steps to preserve and protect it.

34. Recognizing that human activities exacerbated the impact of natural disasters was an essential step in disaster planning and mitigation. Storms, droughts and floods, though inevitable, need not necessarily lead to humanitarian crises. Actions should target the most vulnerable and include early warning system development and increased preparedness and risk reduction. Developing country vulnerability was being exacerbated by various global challenges, which in turn made the world's poor more exposed to risk and more vulnerable. Vulnerability to natural hazards increased the scale and scope of disasters and made it harder to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Financial resources to address that problem had thus far been insufficient. The Group supported the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and its mandate.

35. Climate change should be discussed within the context of sustainable development and Committee decisions used to promote its three pillars in an integrated, coordinated and balanced manner. Participants in the Bali Climate Change Conference had recognized the need for deep cuts in global greenhouse gas emissions. Emerging science suggested that even deeper cuts might be needed. Ongoing negotiations under the Bali Action Plan must therefore

result in a successful and ambitious outcome. Developed countries must participate actively in negotiations and take the lead in addressing implementation gaps by complying with their Kyoto Protocol obligations and by facilitating developing country adaptation. They must also meet their financing and technology transfer commitments. While the United Nations should help developing countries formulate policies that attracted climate change-related investment, nationally appropriate mitigation actions must be enabled by technology, financing and capacity-building, in a measurable, reportable and verifiable manner. Developed countries had a binding commitment to provide financial resources. Such resources must be considered additional to official development assistance (ODA).

36. Desertification, drought and land degradation continued to pose a serious threat to development and the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. The situation was exacerbated by climate change and climatic variability. All relevant United Nations agencies should cooperate under the aegis of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, to ensure a holistic response to the threats posed to sustainable development. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) played a key role in helping countries combat desertification and reclaim degraded land. The international community should substantially increase its allocation of resources to the GEF focal area on land degradation during the next replenishment cycle. He commended the efforts of the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to continue its administrative renewal and reform and to streamline its functions in order to fully implement the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and bring them into line with the ten-year strategic plan and framework. He looked forward to the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, when JIU was scheduled to present its findings on the assessment of the Global Mechanism.

37. Committee discussions on biodiversity at the current session should be framed by the decisions taken at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Bonn in May 2008, and by the conclusions reached at the International Union for Conservation of Nature

(IUCN) World Conservation Congress, held in Barcelona earlier that month. The target of significantly reducing biodiversity loss by 2010 seemed an even greater challenge than before. While most biodiversity was found in developing countries, all countries were custodians of the world's ecosystems and all countries benefited from the services they provided. He was therefore pleased that 2010 would be the International Year of Biodiversity. Moreover, he welcomed the adoption at the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity of a road map for the negotiation of an international regime on access to genetic resources and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their use by 2010.

38. He welcomed the report of the UNEP Governing Council on its tenth special session (A/63/25); he hoped that the Council's decisions would guide UNEP in its efforts to address environmental challenges. The Medium-term Strategy for the period 2010-2013 was an important step in the Programme's efforts to become a more effective, efficient and results-focused entity and should enable UNEP to implement its mandate more effectively by building on its existing expertise and comparative advantage in the six priority areas selected. He expressed concern at the slow pace of implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building. While UNEP played an important role, it was even more important for development partners to demonstrate their commitment to the Plan by providing the resources needed for its implementation. The United Nations should demonstrate its commitment to addressing environmental challenges by substantially increasing its allocation of resources to the UNEP regular budget.

39. Lastly, current challenges must not cause fundamental issues to be overlooked and must not be used to delay implementation.

40. **Mr. Hua** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro; and, in addition, Armenia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that efforts to address current needs must not compromise progress for future generations. Sustainable development should be pursued at all levels. He hoped that the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable

Development would be a success. As the midway point of the Commission's multi-year programme of work approached, the Commission could be further improved so as to strengthen its contribution to eradicating poverty, changing unsustainable production and consumption patterns, and protecting natural resources.

41. The international community was not on track to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss significantly by 2010. The European Union was extremely concerned by the unprecedented rate of biodiversity loss and remained committed to implementing strong political responses in order to meet the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Sustained efforts and concrete action were needed if the 2010 target was to be met. Implementation of national strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity must be strengthened and, where appropriate, integrated with development programmes. The European Union was determined to play an active and constructive role in the implementation of and follow-up to the decisions adopted at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Bonn in May 2008, and to that end welcomed the progress made in the negotiation of an international regime on access to genetic resources and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their use and stressed that the target date for its conclusion was 2010; welcomed the scientific criteria for the identification of marine areas in need of protection adopted in the Azores, Portugal, in October 2007; and expressed its readiness to contribute fully to the establishment of an effective international science-policy interface on biodiversity, ecosystem services and human well-being. Biodiversity loss was inextricably linked to land degradation and climate change. Greater cooperation and coordination on those issues at all levels would facilitate sustainable development policies. It was also necessary to have effective cooperation between the various Rio Conventions.

42. The European Union had made climate change a priority and pursued its efforts to build international consensus on a new climate change regime. It was determined to continue to play a leading role and was convinced that the packet of measures on energy and climate currently being discussed in Brussels would play a central role in the formulation of a European response in line with the European Union's

commitment to reduce its emissions to at least 20 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020.

43. The international community must make combating desertification a priority. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification had taken a major step forward with the adoption at the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties, held in Madrid in 2007, of the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008-2018) and a number of decisions relating to the reform of its institutional framework. The European Union considered that such actions would help accelerate and orient the Convention's future work and therefore supported their implementation and the efforts of the Convention secretariat. Climate change, desertification and land degradation were inextricably linked. The related challenges would not be met without close cooperation between the Rio Conventions and greater attention to desertification and land degradation in development and climate change policies.

44. The European Union was satisfied with the discussions held at, and the outcome of, the tenth special session of the UNEP Governing Council, held in Monaco in February 2008. In particular, it welcomed the Medium-term Strategy for the period 2010-2013 and made a plea for its full implementation. Noting the need for a more ambitious reform of international environmental governance, he expressed the hope that the informal consultations currently under way would lead to the adoption, by consensus, of a balanced and ambitious resolution that provided the basis for discussions on such reform.

45. Natural disasters were a major obstacle to sustainable development. The European Union was determined to help at-risk communities implement the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 and thereby reduce their vulnerability to risks and adapt to climate change. A comprehensive approach by the entire international disaster reduction system was essential. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction was key in that regard. The European Union was currently preparing a strategy for disaster risk reduction in developing countries. The strategy would offer a new comprehensive approach comprising development cooperation and humanitarian assistance for all developing regions and encompassing disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. A greater linkage between disaster risk reduction and

climate change adaptation presented a number of advantages.

46. The European Union enjoyed a long history of cooperation with small island developing States, for which climate change was a major challenge. Today, it was working towards the effective implementation of its global alliance with the developing countries most affected by climate change. The alliance would be a forum for discussion and a framework for exchanges in a number of key areas relating to climate change and disaster risk reduction.

47. The attainment of the MDGs would depend to a large extent on the international community's ability to achieve the sustainable development of cities. To that end, all parties must cooperate at all levels and a renewed commitment be made to implementing the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). The Programme should continue to assist Member States in meeting the objectives agreed by the international community. By focusing on its main areas of action, UN-Habitat would be able to better perform its role as a catalyst for sustainable urbanization. In that connection, the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for 2008-2013 provided a solid basis on which to strengthen UN-Habitat and bring its institutional reform to a successful conclusion.

48. **Mr. Sorcar** (Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the least developed countries, said that the world was more united than ever in combating climate change. The road to the Bali Climate Change Conference had been filled with hope. Unity must now be translated into action.

49. If agreement were to be reached by 2009, the climate change discourse must be depoliticized. A drastic cut in emissions required drastic measures. Developed countries must make a unilateral, meaningful and unconditional commitment to reduce their emissions. Comparable commitments should be made by advanced developing countries. The post-Kyoto agreement must protect the most vulnerable countries and recognize their special and compelling needs.

50. Adaptation remained key for least developed countries' survival and development and required resources to be mobilized at all levels. Indeed, the funding currently available was minuscule in comparison to the tens of billions of dollars needed to

meet adaptation needs. Serious consideration should therefore be given to the proposal whereby developed countries would provide 0.5 to 1 per cent of their gross national income (GNI) as new and additional funds to combat climate change. Resources must be distributed equitably and least developed country participation in the clean development mechanism broadened. Annex I parties, meanwhile, should provide further financial support to the implementation of the Nairobi Framework.

51. The post-Kyoto agreement must ensure that vulnerable countries had access to eco-friendly and cost-effective technologies. To that end, he proposed establishing a technology transfer board to facilitate technology transfer for sustainable development in the least developed countries.

52. The challenges posed by ever more frequent and devastating disasters were magnified by climate change and soaring food prices. Building resilience to natural disasters was critical. Investment in disaster risk reduction must be increased substantially if the Hyogo Framework of Action was to be implemented. Resources currently fell short of requirements. While national Governments bore primary responsibility for responding to emergencies, their efforts must be supported by adequate international assistance. Disaster risk reduction and adaptation measures shared common theoretical and methodological components. A better integration of the two provided a tremendous opportunity to achieve sustainable development. Lastly, he agreed that the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction secretariat should be strengthened. Careful consideration should be given to alternative financing methods, including secondments from agencies and Member States.

53. **Mr. Natalegawa** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that, in its efforts to address the current financial and economic crisis, the international community must not neglect other problems. Sidelining energy and food security and climate change would not lead to sustainable economic recovery. Rather, efforts must focus on long-term sustainable growth. Advancing the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, provided the foundation for a durable global solution. The three pillars of sustainable development must be strengthened to ensure long-term economic growth, social development

and environmental protection. To that end, a genuine partnership for prosperity must be established.

54. A fresh approach was needed, where environmental sustainability complemented rather than opposed development. To secure such an approach, reforms were required. An inclusive, transparent and fair international financial architecture was the keystone of sound sustainable growth. Reforms should recognize that sustainable development could not thrive without food security. A second green revolution that ensured global food security and promoted rural prosperity was urgently needed. Moreover, revitalized global agricultural development would help alleviate the pressures of urbanization and ensure decent work for all. Reforms were also needed to prevent natural disasters from reversing years of development gains.

55. Reforms should also recognize the complex interrelationship between climate change, biodiversity, land degradation, drought and desertification. To that end, synergies between the Rio Conventions must be promoted. The Bali Action Plan offered a valuable opportunity to address the challenges of climate change in a comprehensive manner. Finance and technology transfer from developed countries to developing countries underpinned global climate cooperation. Financing to reduce deforestation-related emissions was particularly important.

56. He welcomed the adoption at the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity of a road map for the negotiation of an international regime on access to genetic resources and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their use by 2010. The momentum generated by the decision to make 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity should be used to pursue a more efficient and coherent implementation of the Convention's objectives and achieve a significant reduction in biodiversity loss. The International Year should be used to review two decades of sustainable development and renew commitments. The United Nations was a key player in the attainment of existing environmental goals, supported by the international environmental governance structure.

57. At the thirteenth ASEAN Summit, held in 2007, ASEAN leaders had undertaken to strengthen regional cooperation on energy, the environment, climate change and sustainable development. Countries in the region were deepening cooperation on a wide range of

activities and had agreed to explore the safe and sustainable use of alternative energies. The challenges of urbanization, meanwhile, were being addressed through the Cool ASEAN, Green Capitals Initiative. Ten cities had received a reward for their efforts towards environmental sustainability. ASEAN was also working to create safer communities amid natural disasters, drawing on the lessons learned from the 2004 Asian tsunami and other recent disasters. Its support for other relevant initiatives demonstrated its commitment to pursuing a green development agenda.

58. **Mr. Muita** (Kenya), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that, in the area of sustainable development, environmental progress should complement economic and social progress. He urgently called for sustainable solutions to environmental challenges that took into account poverty, hunger, environmental protection and underdevelopment. In spite of the current global crises, efforts to further international cooperation for the funding of environmental programmes and projects and climate change adaptation should continue unabated.

59. He welcomed the focus on Africa's needs at the sixteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, as well as the recent High-level Meeting on Africa's Development Needs and the High-level Event on the Millennium Development Goals, and hoped that the negotiations would yield tangible results in terms of support to Africa's sustainable development efforts. It was important to involve all stakeholders in sustainable development actions. The full and speedy implementation of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Monterrey Consensus was essential if progress was to be made.

60. Small island developing States were increasingly vulnerable; without the support of the international community, their sustainable development efforts would be at risk of stagnating. A coordinated, coherent and systematic approach, together with the financial and technical support of the international community, was critical to the full implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. He therefore reiterated his call to the international community, particularly the developed countries, to honour their commitments in those agreements.

61. The Hyogo Framework for Action must be fully implemented. With that in mind, the international community needed to examine measures to improve the response capacity of affected nations and the assistance it could provide to those nations. There too, the financial support of developed countries was urgently needed.
62. Action by all countries, particularly the developed countries, would be required to address adaptation to climate change, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. The discussions of the Committee should provide impetus and political support to ongoing processes by promoting global consensus on climate change and should contribute to the forthcoming Poznań Conference on Climate Change. Desertification and land degradation continued to pose a threat to sustainable development, particularly in Africa. The African Group called for increased funding for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to support implementation of its strategic plan as well as national plans of action to combat desertification in African countries.
63. It was of the utmost importance for the negotiations on the international regime on access and benefit-sharing to be completed within the established time frame. Conservation of biological diversity could not be achieved without the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. Greater progress must be made towards implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity and achieving a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity by 2010.
64. The outcome of the tenth special session of the UNEP Governing Council, particularly with regard to the proposed medium-term strategy for the period 2010 to 2013, was critical to the future work of UNEP. The urgent and effective implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building would reflect the international community's commitment to translating agreements into concrete actions, particularly with regard to the environment. However, if UNEP was to succeed, it must receive adequate financial and technical resources as well as capacity-building. He called on the United Nations to increase its allocations to the regular budget of UNEP and urged donors to scale up their support to UNEP activities.
65. **Mr. Heller** (Mexico), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that, rather than focus exclusively on the financial crisis, it was crucial to continue efforts to reduce social inequality. The international community must work with the Commission on Sustainable Development to reach tangible results that helped countries fulfil their commitments on sustainable development. The five items to be considered in the 2008/2009 cycle of the Commission were equally important and must be addressed in a balanced manner. As the cycle involved policy negotiations, the programme of work must allow sufficient negotiating time. With that in mind, he proposed that the outcome of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting in February 2009 should be an initial negotiating text, to be distributed prior to the seventeenth session in May 2009.
66. The international community must increase international cooperation and develop concrete proposals in order to achieve the goal of reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. He supported the work of the Ad-Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing and the adoption of the road map for the conclusion of the regime on access and benefit-sharing by the most recent Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. A successful agreement would not only support the objectives of the Convention, but would also help eradicate poverty, achieve the MDGs and protect and manage the natural resources in developing countries.
67. Desertification and land degradation increased the vulnerability of communities, resulting in higher poverty and migration rates, and thus creating potential threats to food security and to natural resources. In that context, it was important to continue supporting the work of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the efforts under way to implement its regional implementation annex for Latin America and the Caribbean.
68. No country was able to deal with climate change alone. Developing countries in particular faced major challenges in adapting to the effects of climate change; international cooperation and technology transfer were therefore required. The financial crisis should be approached as an opportunity to further efforts to combat climate change, as both issues required investment in energy efficiency, promotion of renewable sources of energy and incentives to stimulate economic growth. The Rio Group was

committed to strengthening the international climate change regime established under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, as well as to ongoing negotiations under the Bali Action Plan, with a view to achieving an effective regime on climate change in 2009, under the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

69. Natural disasters were a major concern, as they not only threatened to reverse the progress made towards the MDGs and national development plans, but also diverted financial resources that might be otherwise used. International cooperation on technology transfer must be strengthened to enable countries to develop early warning systems, contingency plans and adaptation strategies. It was important to promote disaster management policies that simultaneously addressed climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. The Rio Group was committed to strengthening the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and looked forward to the second meeting of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which would provide further strategic guidance on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

70. **Mr. Snowden** (United States of America) said that the Commission for Sustainable Development had galvanized action and helped shape the agendas of a wide range of organizations around the world. Its results-oriented programme of work had effectively integrated the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development. Given the success of the Commission and in light of its schedule of cycles, the necessity of a Rio + 20 summit, currently under consideration, should be closely examined. Another summit could detract valuable attention from ongoing efforts to fulfil commitments and to implement Agenda 21 and have limited additional benefits, if any. Such a summit would also disrupt the Commission's cycle of work linked to Agenda 21 that was to end in 2017. He questioned whether such a summit would be the best use of financial and human resources in the current economic climate and above all advocated continuing progress towards existing commitments and spending resources on actions that directly produced results.

71. The ongoing General Assembly process on international environmental governance was an important aspect of the global sustainable development

agenda. It was clear, however, that opinions varied widely on the process, including on what would constitute true improvements to international environmental governance. Nevertheless, all stakeholders agreed that it was important to safeguard the environment and work towards sustainable development. The work of UNEP and UNDP on the Poverty and Environment Initiative was an excellent example of leveraging expertise and partnering effectively. The initiative directly addressed sustainable development and built capacity on the ground. All such positive developments were the result of recent efforts to improve environmental governance; such efforts should be given time to succeed.

72. The United States remained committed to a comprehensive and effective post-2012 arrangement to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and was fully engaged in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process. He urged the Committee to fully support that process and to allow climate experts a better chance at success by avoiding prejudgement of their negotiations.

73. **Mr. Liu Yuyin** (China) said that the international community must strengthen policy coordination, ensure food and energy security, and maintain sustained economic growth so as to lay an economic foundation for sustainable development. Developed countries, in particular, must take concrete actions to provide new and additional financial assistance, reduce and cancel debt, curb trade protectionism, open markets and transfer technology to the developing countries. The United Nations should continue to play a leading role in sustainable development and to promote the implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

74. The development of small island developing States was an important part of global sustainable development. The international community should strengthen cooperation with such States, taking account of their special needs, with a view to effectively implementing the Mauritius Strategy. Commitments in the areas of financial assistance and technology transfer must be honoured to build the capacity of those States and to help them achieve sustainable development.

75. Disaster reduction must be given priority attention as a strategic issue in economic and social

development. Preventing and responding to natural disasters required enhanced international and regional cooperation. The international community should continue to improve disaster reduction policies and humanitarian relief cooperation, with the United Nations at its core; to enhance natural disaster monitoring and early warning; to strengthen developing countries' capacity in disaster prevention, preparedness and reduction; to ensure long-term, stable and predictable core funding for disaster reduction; and to increase support for the Central Emergency Response Fund.

76. Climate change should be addressed within the framework of sustainable development. The current financial crisis had made addressing climate change more challenging. Members of the international community should join forces to respond to current economic difficulties; at the same time, they must not slacken their efforts to tackle the problem of climate change.

77. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol constituted the basic international legal framework for addressing climate change. The international community should continue to rely on the Convention and its Protocol as the main channels for international cooperation and negotiations and should also implement the Bali Road Map in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The Chinese Government attached great importance to the issue of climate change and had adopted a series of successful measures to conserve energy and protect the environment.

78. The international negotiations under the Bali Road Map were at a critical stage. China supported reaching a fair, reasonable and effective post-2012 agreement and supported the due role of the United Nations in that process.

79. While some progress had been made since the entry into force of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the trend of global desertification had been neither effectively controlled nor reversed. His Government supported the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008-2018). The international community, particularly developed countries, should recognize the urgency of the problem of desertification and the link between desertification and poverty; meet its obligations in funding and

technology transfer; support the efforts of developing countries to combat desertification; help developing countries achieve sustainable development; and ensure comprehensive and effective implementation of the Convention.

80. The Chinese Government supported strengthening international environmental governance. In doing so, the foremost priority should be to build developing countries' capacity in environmental protection. International environmental governance must be approached within the framework of sustainable development in order to ensure a balance between economic growth, social development and environmental protection. The improvement of international environmental governance was a gradual process that should be fully discussed and effectively advanced.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

**General Assembly**

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Second Committee**Summary record of the 18th meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 27 October 2008, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Metelitsa (Vice-Chairperson) (Belarus)**Contents**Agenda item 49: Sustainable development (*continued*)

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- (b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (*continued*)
- (c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (*continued*)
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In the absence of Ms. Ogwu (Nigeria), Mr. Metelitsa (Belarus), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 49: Sustainable development (*continued*)
(A/63/66, A/63/76-E/2008/54 and A/63/225)

- (a) **Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development** (*continued*) (A/63/304 and A/C.2/63/3)
- (b) **Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States** (*continued*) (A/63/296 and A/63/297)
- (c) **International Strategy for Disaster Reduction** (*continued*) (A/63/347 and A/63/351)
- (d) **Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind** (*continued*)
(A/63/294 and A/C.2/63/3)
- (e) **Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa** (*continued*) (A/63/294 and A/C.2/63/3)
- (f) **Convention on Biological Diversity** (*continued*)
(A/63/294 and A/C.2/63/3)
- (g) **Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its tenth special session** (*continued*) (A/63/25, Supplement No. 25)

1. **Ms. Elrington** (Belize), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that CARICOM remained committed to ensuring that the General Assembly recognized the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, without prejudice to relevant international law. Following the establishment of the Caribbean Sea Commission and the adoption of its plan of action, such recognition was needed to ensure effective regional collaboration in and to give full effect to General Assembly resolution 61/197, notwithstanding

the various challenges presented by the unique characteristics of the Caribbean Sea, which had more countries surrounding it, and more maritime boundaries, than any other large marine ecosystem.

2. CARICOM also underscored the importance of follow-up and implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action, welcoming the decision of the Commission on Sustainable Development to dedicate one day of its sixteenth session exclusively to small island developing States. Emphasizing the need for urgent action to assist those States in addressing the worsening challenges resulting from the impact of climate change, it acknowledged the valuable support already provided and reiterated its appeal for increased financing and strengthening of the Small Island Developing States Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which had an important role to play in monitoring and providing technical support to small island developing States in their implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, particularly during the preparatory process for its review.

3. Given the particularly devastating impact of the 2008 Atlantic hurricane season on Caribbean small island developing States, CARICOM called on the international community to intensify efforts to provide timely humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to the countries concerned. The many natural disasters that had affected the Caribbean region in recent years highlighted its vulnerability to climate change; urgent, comprehensive and decisive global action to address that challenge therefore remained a priority for CARICOM. The negotiations currently under way in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change must give rise to a comprehensive and ambitious global agreement to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide new, predictable and easily accessible financing for adaptation. In that regard, the scope of the adaptation projects implemented to date in the Caribbean region had been limited owing to a lack of resources and CARICOM, welcoming the commitment already made by Greece, urged its other development partners to consider providing assistance by funding projects and facilitating the transfer of technology and know-how. Despite their negligible contributions to greenhouse gas emissions, the CARICOM member

States recognized collective responsibility for mitigation, supporting renewable energy as an essential pillar of future mitigation and encouraging the development of innovative mechanisms to support sustainable forest management.

4. **Mrs. Osman** (Sudan) said that complex and multi-dimensional global challenges were posing serious threats to efforts to achieve sustainable development, particularly in the areas of climate change, desertification and biodiversity. On climate change, recurrent droughts and floods had created a pressing need for her country to take action on national priorities such as food security, water supply and public health. Its National Adaptation Plan of Action aimed to identify urgent activities for addressing climate change in the light of those priorities; however, insufficient funding, weak institutional capacities and limited infrastructure development posed challenges to its implementation. While contributing less than 0.1 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, the country had taken steps to make its development activities more sustainable, but it also believed that action on climate change must be based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Developed countries should therefore make deep cuts in their greenhouse gas emissions and support developing countries through the provision of technology and funding in a measurable, reportable and verifiable manner. The special situation of the most vulnerable countries, particularly the least developed countries, must also be at the heart of any collective strategy to combat climate change.

5. With regard to desertification, a serious threat aggravated by the impact of climate change and rapid population growth, the Sudan had ratified the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa and called on the international community to provide adequate and predictable resources to assist the worst affected countries in implementing that Convention. As the largest country in Africa, with a huge variety of ecosystems, the Sudan also placed a high priority on preserving biodiversity and had adopted a national environmental action plan to protect and restore its ecosystems and promote the sustainable use of natural resources. It welcomed the decision taken at the ninth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity regarding the transfer of technology and

resource mobilization, which were both critical for implementation of the Convention's objectives.

6. **Ms. Blum** (Colombia) said that the global problem of climate change must be urgently addressed in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. A more decisive commitment from the developed countries was therefore required, in line with their historical responsibility, together with greater international support for the adaptation measures of developing countries, which were more vulnerable to the impacts of global warming. The Committee should promote widespread acceptance of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as the main focus of negotiations on climate change; following the major decisions reached at the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the third session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, held in Bali, it was important to avoid creating parallel agendas.

7. As a country that enjoyed an extremely diverse natural heritage, Colombia had been working to conserve, restore and manage its ecosystems and ranked ninth in the Environmental Performance Index 2008 developed by Yale and Columbia Universities. The huge efforts made by countries such as hers in both human and financial terms to protect the environment required greater international support. The international community should, in particular, support Colombia's programmes to eradicate illicit drug cultivation — which resulted in deforestation, desertification, destruction of ecosystems and depletion of water resources — on the basis of shared responsibility for the global drug problem. Progress must also be achieved in negotiations on the international regime on access and benefit-sharing under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

8. Given the important role played by the United Nations system in environmental matters and the need for better coordinated and more efficient international governance, the Assembly should work to strengthen the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as a priority.

9. **Mr. Kononuchenko** (Russian Federation) said that his country had been consistently involved in United Nations efforts aimed at implementing Agenda 21, the

outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

10. UNEP continued to play a key role in addressing current environmental problems. His delegation commended the outcomes of the tenth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and also noted with interest the measures being taken to improve its structure.

11. The adoption of the Bali Action Plan by consensus in December 2007 was a real step forward in international efforts to combat climate change. The forthcoming fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, to be held in Poznań, should also make a worthy contribution to the post-Kyoto regime.

12. It was important to continue international efforts to conserve biodiversity and to combat desertification. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the steps taken to implement the outcomes of the latest Conferences of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

13. The Commission on Sustainable Development should bring to a successful conclusion its cycle of work on agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. The current food crisis made the Commission's work all the more relevant. All Member States should do their utmost to ensure that the decisions of the Commission's next session duly reflected the latest trends with respect to agriculture and its role in national development strategies.

14. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction was the appropriate forum for continued cooperation in natural disaster prevention and mitigation. The dialogue held in that context should remain informal and non-politicized and it was also important to have effective working relations between the Platform and the General Assembly.

15. There was a need to focus on disaster forecasting, preparedness and rapid reaction on the part of national and international humanitarian agencies. It was also necessary to strengthen early warning systems and to improve damage assessment and disaster mitigation efforts. To that end, the international community

should increase its cooperation in those areas, including by exchanging experience and information and by providing training.

16. **Mr. Bendourou** (Morocco) said that his country had made environmental protection a key factor in its economic and social development by pursuing an environmental policy based on the concept of sustainable development. Among the many reforms implemented, it had taken a range of legislative and institutional measures to preserve its water resources and had introduced a new irrigation development strategy as part of its efforts to develop a sustainable agriculture.

17. In view of the major climate-related, geological and biological risks it faced owing to its geographical situation, and aware of the economic and social impact of natural disasters, Morocco had strengthened its natural disaster risk reduction policy over the past decade, its ultimate objective being to reduce significantly both the number of victims and the scale of the material losses caused by natural disasters. Its strategy was structured in accordance with the priorities set out in the Hyogo Declaration, while it considered risk prevention to be a responsibility shared by the State and its citizens.

18. Since the reality of climate change was no longer in doubt, his country was working with other developing countries to foster concerted multilateral action to conclude, within the agreed time frame, a new climate treaty that should facilitate developing countries' adaptation to the effects of climate change, as well as mobilizing additional investments and adaptation technologies in strategic sectors such as energy, water management, agriculture and forests. Morocco placed particular emphasis on the strengthening of national reforestation programmes, as well as calling for greater international cooperation and for a partnership approach to the clean development mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol. It also advocated an action plan focused on the use of early warning systems, vulnerability mapping and risk assessment to identify national priorities for short- and long-term adaptation to climate change. In response to the specific challenges of its arid climate and ever longer periods of drought, it had developed a national programme of action to combat desertification, based on a participatory approach involving all the various actors and partners concerned.

19. **Mr. Thaung Tun** (Myanmar), stressing that sustainable development could not be achieved without effectively addressing the problem of extreme poverty, said that his country had adopted the Myanmar Agenda 21 in 1997 to ensure that environmental and sustainable development policy considerations were incorporated into decision-making in the economic and social sectors. Moreover, in 1995 it had introduced a new forest policy to promote sustainable forest management while meeting socio-economic and community needs and conserving biological diversity and environmental stability; remedial measures were also being taken to counter the adverse effects of encroachment on forest lands for agriculture, industry and housing, among other factors, and his Government had been taking effective conservation and preservation measures to protect wildlife and plants and extend existing forest areas. Since agriculture was the mainstay of its economy, his country had developed national plans for agriculture in order to promote economic development, provide food security and alleviate poverty, while also taking steps, such as improving the content of livestock feeds, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

20. Cyclone Nargis was the worst natural disaster to have hit Myanmar in recorded history. The country had mobilized relief and rehabilitation activities in the affected areas and had also requested and received emergency assistance from the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund. Its national medical relief efforts, complemented by civilian medical teams from a number of other countries, had succeeded in averting the outbreak of epidemics. Climate change, as evidenced by the impact of cyclone Nargis in his country, could have a serious impact on Governments' efforts to promote economic and social development and must therefore be addressed through concerted international action, which would involve new and additional resources being made available to developing countries for adaptation and mitigation measures.

21. **Mr. Ben-Tura** (Israel) said that urgent action was needed to ensure environmental protection and to combat climate change, which threatened the sustainable development of all countries, both rich and poor. Welcoming the conclusion of the report of the Secretary-General (A/63/304) regarding the need for broad participation in implementation of sustainable development principles, his delegation considered that

exchanges of lessons learned and best practices could boost efficiency and facilitate the incorporation of those principles in national development plans; the Commission for Sustainable Development could serve as a productive forum for such exchanges.

22. Israel had made progress in sustainable development and believed that it was therefore in a position to share knowledge and expertise with other States and regions, particularly in the area of water management. In response to the physical scarcity of water in its region, it had developed various affordable management resources, such as water recycling, sewage reprocessing and desalination, based on sustainable development principles. Such measures also dovetailed with its efforts to combat desertification; having been one of the first countries to sign and ratify the Convention to Combat Desertification, it was active among the northern Mediterranean countries that had established a portal for the exchange of metadata on desertification and was working to provide knowledge and training to other countries. It was also considering initiating a forum to improve synergies between the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

23. In contrast to the overall decline in domestic public expenditures by countries in their agricultural sectors since 1980, mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General (A/63/304), his country had continually advocated the role of agriculture in development and had invested resources to develop technology and know-how in that sector. In June 2008 its Centre for International Cooperation had signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Development Programme in Africa for cooperation on agriculture.

24. **Ms. Legarda** (Philippines) said that her country fully subscribed to the principle of balance of commitments enshrined in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and had therefore submitted proposals for more responsive financing and technology transfer mechanisms under the Bali Action Plan in order to rectify the current unpredictable and inadequate levels of funding, which were inconsistent with those commitments.

25. Greater focus should be given to adaptation rather than mitigation efforts under the Convention. In order

to adapt to climate change it was necessary to reduce underlying vulnerabilities, build response capacities and manage climate risks, which would entail a proactive and preventive national strategy. Her country's commitment to the Convention had been demonstrated by its adoption of comprehensive policies that balanced development and environmental protection within the framework of sustainable development.

26. Parliamentarians from countries vulnerable to climate change had recently held a consultative meeting in Manila, where they had advocated disaster risk reduction policies not only as national and community priorities but also as a cost-effective means of adapting to climate change. Effective disaster reduction at the national level was provided for by the Hyogo Framework for Action. The process of transforming that Framework should therefore be made into an internationally binding legal instrument.

27. The Global Congress of Women in Politics and Governance recently held in Manila had adopted the Manila Declaration on Gender in Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction, which called on Governments to comply with their international commitments to gender equality and to pursue gender-responsive plans and strategies. At the same time, it was vitally important to constantly review all such strategies in order to keep pace with any new developments that might increase the effectiveness of efforts to combat climate change.

28. **Ms. Ithete** (Namibia) said that the issue of land remained at the heart of sustainable development, and that she wished to focus on the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Her country was particularly vulnerable to soil erosion caused by heavy rains following periods of drought, which was the starting point of the desertification process. It promoted community-based natural resource management in the belief that ecologically sound resource management would ultimately contribute to poverty reduction and good governance. With the support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and in partnership with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), it had implemented the Country Pilot Partnership for Integrated Sustainable Land Management. She called on the international community to substantially increase its allocations for the land degradation focal area of the GEF during the next replenishment of the Global Environment Trust

Fund. As regards desertification, prevention was cheaper than cure. She was encouraged by the close cooperation between the secretariats of the Rio Conventions and the Commission on Sustainable Development and looked forward to participating in the Commission's upcoming seventeenth session.

29. **Ms. Aitimova** (Kazakhstan) said that poverty reduction was the key to sustainable development, but that steps to address the various global crises should not lose sight of the goal of environmental sustainability. Her own country's efforts to increase agricultural production respected environmental principles such as maintenance of transboundary basins. The role of the United Nations as intermediary between the developed and developing countries was more crucial than ever in facilitating technology transfer and ensuring the type of investments in agriculture that would enable grain-exporting countries like hers to contribute to alleviation of the global food crisis. Her country was trying to make a "technological leap forward" in sustainable water and energy use and was pursuing partnerships in that endeavour with the non-governmental sector, in line with recommendations of the Commission on Sustainable Development. It had harmonized national measures with international practice in its 2007 National Environmental Code, and had recently ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Kazakhstan was to host a conference of ministers of environmental, economic and social affairs from the Asia-Pacific Region in 2010 and from Europe and Asia in 2011.

30. She expressed gratitude for international assistance with the disasters associated with the drying up of the Aral Sea and nuclear waste in the Semipalatinsk polygon, and appealed to Member States to support the draft resolution calling for observer status for the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea. Her country supported the Hyogo Framework for Action and called for the establishment of more national and regional disaster prevention centres.

31. **Mr. Loh** (Singapore) said that the world's urban population was about to surpass its rural population for the first time in history, which would place an enormous strain on development infrastructure, in Asia in particular. A balance would have to be struck between the resulting increased demand for energy and environmental concerns. As a densely populated island State with no natural resources, his country provided a

good model for that balance, with its judicious use of limited land resources and robust control of its traffic and air pollution. It was also experimenting with advanced water treatment technology, including seawater reverse osmosis for desalinization, and had allocated US\$236 million to develop its limited wind and solar resources. It had hosted the World Cities Summit during the recent Singapore International Water Week and planned to do so again in 2010. Developed countries needed to set an example in emissions reductions to encourage developing states not to allow development needs to overshadow environmental concerns.

32. **Ms. Bensmail** (Algeria) said that speculation in agriculture and the financial markets, bad trade policies, natural disasters and climate change were all to blame for the current crises. The upcoming seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development would offer an opportunity for further progress toward the goals of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Her country had taken concrete steps to bolster the three economic, social and environmental pillars of development in its national plans to develop agriculture and fight poverty, desertification and deforestation, which had been accompanied by economic reforms to promote private sector involvement. Her country's Minister of the Environment had been the honorary United Nations spokesman for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification in 2006, and its 2007 proposal to UNEP had resulted in the designation by the United Nations General Assembly of 2010-2020 as the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification. She welcomed the ten-year strategic plan adopted at the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and hoped for further progress on climate change at the upcoming Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.

33. **Mr. Osuga** (Japan) described the outcome of the Group of Eight Summit in July and the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in May, as well as his Government's actions in the relevant areas. The leaders comprising the Group of Eight had shared the view that the challenge of climate change could be met only by contributions from all major economies, consistent with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. They had declared that they would

seek a reduction in global emissions of at least 50 per cent by all parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, by 2050. As the forthcoming Climate Change Conference would examine proposals for the post-2012 framework, Japan had in September submitted its proposals for an effective framework in which all major economies would participate in a responsible way to achieve global emission reductions.

34. The Group of Eight leaders had also declared that they would continue and enhance cooperation with developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, in their efforts to adapt to climate change, including in the sphere of disaster risk reduction.

35. As part of its effort to deal with the effects of climate change, Japan had set up the Cool Earth Partnership at a level of \$10 billion and was extending assistance to developing countries that sought to combine emissions reductions with economic growth. The Cool Earth Partnership had been welcomed by the delegates from 51 African countries at TICAD IV.

36. Water and sanitation formed one of the key development areas closely related to climate change and the MDGs. The participants in the Group of Eight Summit had declared that they would promote integrated water resource management, with particular focus on sub-Saharan Africa and the Asia-Pacific region. The participants in TICAD IV had also acknowledged that it was essential to promote the sustainable use of water resources. Since the 1990s, Japan had been the largest donor of official development assistance (ODA) in the water and sanitation sector, and was determined even to increase its efforts to assist developing countries in that area.

37. In the area of biodiversity, the Group of Eight leaders had endorsed the Kobe Call for Action for Biodiversity, which called upon all countries to work together to promote actions in the following areas: 2010 Biodiversity Target and follow-up actions, sustainable use of biodiversity, protected areas, private sector engagement and scientific capabilities for monitoring. The year 2010 would be the International Year of Biodiversity, during which Japan would host the tenth Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

38. There was no doubt that international environmental governance must be further strengthened. Effective use must be made of the

knowledge and expertise accumulated within UNEP and existing multilateral environmental agreements, through creating synergies and promoting coherence. Promotion of education, public awareness and training were vitally important to sustainable development. The participants in TICAD IV had acknowledged the importance of promoting Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) initiatives, while the Group of Eight leaders had declared that they would promote ESD by supporting UNESCO and other organizations in encouraging a more sustainable and low-carbon society. Japan was fully committed to contributing to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

39. **Mrs. Zemene** (Ethiopia) observed that the Secretary-General's report in document A/63/304 clearly explained the impact of climate change causing millions of people to fall back into poverty. Ethiopia strongly supported the focus in the report on helping developing countries to expand agricultural production.

40. Ethiopia was a party to the most important international environmental conventions, in particular those covering climate change, biodiversity and desertification. It had a National Action Plan of Environmental Protection, designed to bring about sustainable development and to address multi-faceted environmental issues. The year-long celebration of the Ethiopian millennium, which had just concluded, had rallied millions of people behind the idea of reforestation and its tree-planting agenda had been accorded due recognition at the international level.

41. In connection with the current rises in global food and energy prices, the anticipated focus on a green revolution to address the food crisis, and the quest for alternative sources of energy including biofuels, were closely associated with the environment. If the sustainability of the environment was to be maintained, countries needed to strike the right balance between increasing production of food crops and the search for alternative sources of energy.

42. Notwithstanding the challenges posed by natural calamities, lack of capacity and insufficient financial resources, Ethiopia focused on raising awareness in the rural population of the need to combat desertification, enhance dry-land farming and use renewable energy. Importance was also attached to consolidation of the capacity of local institutions in order to minimize the

impacts of environmental change on the agricultural sector.

43. Support from development partners was crucial to augment the national efforts of developing countries, particularly those in Africa. Capacity-building and technical assistance ventures to strengthen indigenous techniques for environmental protection, methods of cleaner production in agriculture or in industry, and support for efforts to fight desertification were of paramount importance.

44. **Mr. Hirsch** (Norway) said that the potential ravages of climate change might be so severe as to nullify development efforts in poor countries. Millions of people in sub-Saharan Africa alone could die of diseases directly attributable to climate change; progress already achieved could be reversed. Steps taken to deal with poverty and with climate change must be mutually reinforcing; the world could not choose between development and environment. In order to develop, developing economies would require more energy. But the goal must be economic growth without emissions growth, which would require increased emphasis on renewable energy and energy efficiency.

45. At the same time, for perhaps another half-century, the global energy mix would probably still be dominated by fossil fuels. Thus, even with major technological breakthroughs in renewables, it was vital to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the production and use of fossil fuels. Carbon capture and storage (CCS) was one of the most promising technologies in that context. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, CCS could ensure about 20 per cent of the global reductions in emissions that had to be achieved by 2050, about the same proportion as could be expected from renewable energy. Norway had embarked on an ambitious CCS programme, being one of the few countries that already had significant practical experience of the process. Within a few years, it aimed to operate a full-scale carbon capture and storage facility. However, worldwide deployment of CCS could be achieved only through international cooperation. The developed world had a special responsibility to develop the technology, and to create a financial framework that would make it commercially attractive.

46. Deforestation and forest degradation accounted for just under 20 per cent of global greenhouse gas

emissions, and action to stop deforestation could provide quick and relatively cost-effective emission reductions. In consequence, Norway had announced a major initiative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation at the Bali Climate Change Conference, with funding of up to \$500 million a year. In Norway's view, emissions from deforestation and forest degradation should be included in the new global agreement under the Framework Convention that it was hoped would be concluded in Copenhagen in 2009. Norway was pleased to observe that other nations were increasingly supporting related endeavours, but noted the risk of proliferation of uncoordinated activities. It therefore stressed the importance of closely coordinated international support for tropical countries in their efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

47. There were close links between efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the sustainable management of natural resources and biological diversity. Biodiversity provided essential ecosystem services such as food, water, building materials and medicines, but it was being threatened by climate change. The latest Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity had identified the close links between biodiversity and climate change.

48. Climate change adaptation measures must be integrated with disaster risk reduction in sustainable development efforts. It had been suggested that 1 per cent of ODA should be earmarked for disaster risk reduction, so as to ensure that the developing countries' investments were disaster-proof and thus more resilient to climate change. Norway was prepared to increase its investment in risk reduction to help disaster-prone countries that demonstrated political commitment, but would expect specific results. The Trust Fund for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction was an important channel for such support. Finally, Norway welcomed the creation of the new post of Assistant-Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction.

49. **Mr. Kalilangwe** (Malawi) noted that the many challenges resulting from rising food and energy costs, poverty and hunger, rapid environmental degradation, climate change and global warming were threatening the attainment of sustainable development in many countries. The most affected were the least developed countries whose economies were predominantly agriculture-based, such as Malawi. Erratic rains,

prolonged periods of drought and flash floods continued to harm agricultural production and, consequently, the ability of the Malawi Government to scale up sustained economic growth in order to eradicate poverty and hunger.

50. For those reasons, while Malawi noted that progress was being made to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change at the international level, it believed that more needed to be done. In particular, the assistance, both financial and technical, given to the least developed countries to fight climate change needed to be doubled. Malawi once again called for adherence to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities in the fight against climate change, given that the emission of greenhouse gases from the least developed countries was negligible.

51. In that regard, Malawi hoped that the forthcoming Climate Change Conference would provide an opportunity to reflect further on how to assist poor countries to address the effects of climate change and achieve sustainable development for their people. It hoped that the Conference would be conducted in a fair and transparent manner to ensure that the Framework Convention and the Kyoto Protocol were implemented within the agreed time frame.

52. **Mr. Alahraf** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that desertification claimed hundreds of square kilometres and displaced millions of people every year, and threatened to reverse progress towards development in Africa in particular. Efforts needed to be redoubled to implement the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (2008-2018), and in particular to ensure the financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building needed by the countries that suffered most from desertification. He called for cooperation within the Hyogo Framework for Action to ensure coherence and synergy between climate change and disaster risk reduction agendas, for implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and for proper preparation for the upcoming seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Strong international partnerships were necessary to address the food crisis, especially in Africa.

53. **Mr. Khaleel** (Maldives) said that, although many small island developing States had made substantial strides in economic growth, social development, and environmental conservation, such progress would always be precarious. They were economically more at risk than other developing countries, because of their vulnerability to external shocks, dependence on international trade, and exposure to natural disasters. The current food, fuel and financial crises would have severe and widespread effects on the sustainable development of small island States and other vulnerable countries such as the least developed countries. Significant strains on balance of payments and increases in inflation rates amidst fears of a global recession could hinder the progress made to attain the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It was therefore necessary to act in an integrated and coordinated manner at all levels in order to alleviate the impact of the crises and to create global partnerships for their solution in both the short and long term. Increased official development assistance and technology transfer were necessary to address growing challenges of food security and to support action on mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

54. Despite significant development challenges owing to its unique geography, small and widely dispersed population and acute economic and environmental vulnerability, Maldives had achieved an admirable level of socio-economic growth over the past three decades, with one of the highest rates of gross domestic product growth in South Asia.

55. The MDGs were fully incorporated in the country's national development priorities and Maldives were on track to meet most of the targets by 2015. It had already achieved the Goals of halving extreme poverty and providing universal primary education, and was well on track in the areas of reducing child mortality and improving maternal health. Ensuring environmental sustainability and achieving gender equality remained key challenges, however.

56. His country's ability to maintain and improve on that remarkable level of development was being undermined on a daily basis by the malign impacts of global environmental degradation. For Maldives, climate change was not a distant possibility; it was a present reality. Sea level rise, flooding, diminished availability of fresh water and coral bleaching due to warming seas had become frequent phenomena,

already affecting the country's economy and the lives and livelihoods of its small communities. Volatile and extreme weather patterns continued to force the country to divert its limited resources away from strategic development to recovery and reconstruction.

57. Maldives and other small island developing States contributed the least to global warming and yet their development and indeed very existence were fundamentally threatened by global warming and its consequences. All were aware of the grim predictions in the fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. If those predictions were accurate, Maldives and many other small island developing States would cease to exist within a relatively short period of time. The situation would create a threat to human security directly compromising the most fundamental rights, including the right to life and to self-determination, for millions of people around the world. Addressing the injustices of climate change was an obligation of the entire international community. A comprehensive rights-informed approach to sustainable and just development, anchored in the concept of common but differentiated responsibilities, was the logical and ethical way forward.

58. On the initiative of Maldives and 80 other like-minded countries, the Human Rights Council had recently recognized, for the first time, the link between human rights and climate change. The Council would formally debate the issue at its tenth session, in March 2009, and it was to be hoped that due consideration would be given to the outcome of the debate by those working in the context of the Framework Convention on Climate Change to reach agreement on an effective and equitable successor to the Kyoto Protocol.

59. **Mrs. Hounghbedji** (Benin), referring to the current international financial crisis, noted how quickly the developed countries had mobilized staggering sums of money in an attempt to quell the crisis before it resulted in a genuine recession. It was to be hoped that the financial crisis would not totally overshadow the other current crises, such as those of food security, the environment (resulting from climate change), deforestation, desertification, indebtedness, and so on. The reaction to the financial crisis was proof that the world did have sufficient resources to allow a response of solidarity to economic development problems. The solidarity shown in the Western world could and should extend to all of humanity, in particular with regard to the issue of sustainable development. Benin was

confident that such solidarity would, in fact, be demonstrated.

60. The links had to be investigated between desertification, biological diversity, and climate change, with a view to finding solutions to the severe pressures exerted on natural resources by energy needs, agricultural activities and population growth. The World Summit on Sustainable Development had recognized the fight against desertification as a major contribution to poverty reduction. Stressing the importance of the United Nations Framework Convention to Combat Desertification, as the only legally binding universal instrument dealing with degradation of the soil and desertification, Benin called for an increase in the resources made available in support of the Framework Convention, and was pleased to note the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Secretariat of the Framework Convention and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and the commencement of a strategic work plan.

61. As one of the least developed countries, Benin was extremely vulnerable to the impact of climate change, which would probably increase the frequency, severity and duration of drought in many arid and semi-arid zones. The developed countries, including the United States of America, should make concessions that would enable quantitative commitments for the reduction of greenhouse gases in the post-2012 time frame. In that context, the Economic Community of West African States and the Government of Benin had organized a subregional conference in October 2008 to draw up a regional strategy for West Africa.

62. **Mr. Waramit** (Thailand) said that his country's approach to sustainable development was based on the concept of a "sufficiency economy", which not only complemented the three pillars of sustainable development but was also a traditional philosophy embraced by the Thai people.

63. While natural disasters were inevitable, their worst effects could be offset by developed countries providing effective assistance to the developing world, particularly by means of early warning systems and disaster preparedness initiatives. His delegation therefore encouraged the United Nations to play a more proactive role in that context through the involvement of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the International Strategy for Disaster

Reduction in the establishment of international early warning system networks.

64. The Tsunami Regional Trust Fund had been established with the aim of providing an early warning system for the Asia and Pacific region. His delegation particularly welcomed the financial contributions made by the Governments of Turkey and Nepal and the experts provided by the Government of the Netherlands. It also called on the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to step up its efforts in support of the full implementation of the Fund.

65. The impact of climate change would hamper sustainable development and the achievement of the MDGs. His delegation therefore particularly looked forward to the adoption at the fourteenth session of the Climate Change Conference of the programme of work and action plan agreed under the Bali Road Map. Given that sustainable development was wide in scope and cross-cutting in nature, synergies should be strengthened at all levels between the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

66. Developed countries should also consider providing developing countries with increased assistance in order to help them adapt to climate change and meet the internationally agreed development goals. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the fact that the Adaptation Fund would shortly be fully operational and called for concerted international financial and technical assistance, in addition to existing ODA commitments.

67. **Mr. Rachkov** (Belarus) said that his country supported the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and had consistently contributed to efforts to address the problem of sustainable development at both national and international levels. Climate change and energy security were global and interrelated problems whose solution would require a global partnership.

68. Belarus was the first country to have proposed an amendment whereby it would be added to annex B of the Kyoto Protocol and undertake to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. While the amendment had been adopted in Nairobi by the Climate Change Conference, it had unfortunately been ratified by only nine States. His delegation called on the parties to the

Kyoto Protocol and the representatives of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to complete the internal procedures necessary for the amendment to enter into force.

69. The post-Kyoto regime must provide a more flexible mechanism that would allow States to assume voluntary obligations to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Otherwise, the current absurd situation would continue whereby a State willing to shoulder such obligations was prevented from doing so because of red tape.

70. Belarus placed a great deal of emphasis on the modernization of productive capacities and on the introduction of new technologies, including the use of non-conventional and renewable energy sources. Over the period from 1996 to 2006, Belarus had reduced its carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 130 tonnes of carbon dioxide by enhancing the efficiency of power-generating sources, increasing the use of natural gas and introducing energy-saving technologies. In that context, the Government of Belarus was implementing a national energy-saving programme for the period 2006-2010 with a view to reducing energy expenditure as a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP). As a consequence, national emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere should be reduced by at least 12 million tonnes.

71. His delegation welcomed the outcomes of the Bali Climate Change Conference, particularly the adoption by consensus of the Bali Action Plan, and reiterated its readiness to work constructively with others with a view to reaching agreement on a post-Kyoto regime.

72. Alongside agreements to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the international community should develop an effective system of adaptation and technology transfer measures. There was also an obvious need to establish an effective international mechanism for the transfer of energy-efficient and energy-saving technologies in the context of the current financial and energy crises.

73. Belarus had called for the holding of a thematic debate during the sixty-third session of the General Assembly on the use of alternative and renewable energy sources as the global commons. The debate was an opportunity to discuss a mechanism to provide access to advanced energy technologies to all countries without any infringement of intellectual property

rights. Informal hearings could also be a first step towards developing an agreed global plan to overcome the energy crisis.

74. The General Assembly's thematic debates on climate change had demonstrated that there was political support for joint international efforts to combat climate change. The Poznań Climate Change Conference should make an important contribution to improving the strategic approach to international cooperation in that field.

75. **Mr. Gass** (Switzerland) said that the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development would have the important task of issuing recommendations to overcome the food crisis and to minimize such risks in the future. An analysis of the reasons for the increase in food prices would make it possible to tackle the lack of investment in agriculture. In many developing countries, there was an urgent need to increase food production and investment in rural and agricultural development while prioritizing local agricultural production.

76. The Bali Climate Change Conference had provided a basis for the future international climate regime and the time had come to implement the Bali Road Map and the Bali Action Plan. All Governments should adhere to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. While developed countries and other major emitters must all make substantial efforts to reduce their emissions, it should be recognized that the poorest countries would need additional support.

77. The operationalization of the Adaptation Fund was an immediate priority in order to lend key assistance to the most vulnerable countries during both the current commitment period and the post-Kyoto period. It was therefore important for the Fund to be established on solid financial, institutional and operational bases. Switzerland had already made conceptual and financial contributions to the establishment of the Fund. In that context, his delegation recalled the Swiss proposal to finance adaptation through a financial mechanism based on a global carbon dioxide emissions levy, which could make an important contribution to reducing risks of natural disasters.

78. The advocacy and coordination efforts of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction should be pursued in the context of the climate change

negotiations. While global warming would undoubtedly be a major factor leading to a higher incidence of natural disasters, it was also important not to ignore other sources of vulnerability, such as population growth, unchecked urbanization and damage to ecosystems.

79. The International Strategy mechanisms needed to be strengthened in terms both of governance of the system and of national implementation. His delegation encouraged the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and its partners to establish flexible mechanisms that were adapted to different geographical contexts. For example, efforts aimed at reducing the risk of drought and increasing food security needed to be combined with those designed to curb desertification, conserve biodiversity and adapt to climate change.

80. In order to ensure a substantial increase in investments in the Hyogo Framework for Action, the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction must be able to access the contributions of development partners and climate change adaptation funds. Public and private partnerships should also be further encouraged. The agencies that were partners in the Strategy should pursue their coordination efforts through a joint action programme and make sufficient resources available to achieve the objectives of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

81. The ability of UNEP to provide general guidelines and policy advice should be strengthened, so that the Programme could continue to play an important role in the process of international environmental governance. His delegation welcomed the commitment of UNEP to strengthen its results-based management. In that context, the medium-term strategy of UNEP provided an important basis for establishing that institution's programme of work. His delegation also appreciated the determined efforts of UNEP to promote a coherent international regime for chemical products and hazardous waste. Those were areas where UNEP had key competencies and expertise, which would enable it to make a substantial contribution to formulating the necessary political framework for sustainable development.

82. **Mr. Vickery** (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) said that the Federation's approach to sustainable development was aimed at reducing and

managing risks while increasing resilience at the community level. Governments and other stakeholders had expressed support for that approach, which included efforts to address climate change, through the adoption of a declaration entitled "Together for Humanity" at the thirtieth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. At that Conference, Governments had also agreed to include climate change issues in the agendas of their respective national disaster management committees and then to work with IFRC to find the best way forward for their countries and regions.

83. Risk management strategies were central to IFRC efforts to combat climate change. For example, over the past decade the Vietnamese Red Cross had planted some 175 square metres of mangrove forest along almost 200 kilometres of national coastline, thereby improving the livelihoods of an estimated 7,750 families and markedly improving their resilience to climate change. Another example based on a different approach was the Nepalese Red Cross Society's Community Development Programme, which aimed to address the health hazards confronting the most vulnerable people in Nepalese society, particularly women and children, and to enhance their social status. Both examples demonstrated how to build sustainability in communities through programmes that protected the dignity of people and enabled them to contribute meaningfully to their own prosperity and to the achievement of the MDGs.

84. The integration of risk management into the adaptation agenda would require changes not only in policy but also in mindset. The Federation had therefore agreed to convene an inter-agency task force to provide inputs on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, among other issues, in preparation for the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in 2009. To that end, IFRC would be working at the forthcoming Poznań Conference to achieve a much stronger commitment to sustainable development from other actors at the community level. It would also expect strong governmental commitments to support community programming.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

**General Assembly**

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Second Committee**Summary record of the 19th meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 28 October 2008, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Metelitsa (Vice-Chairperson)..... (Belarus)**Contents**

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Agenda item 49: Sustainable development (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*continued*)

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- (e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (*continued*)
- (f) Convention on Biological Diversity (*continued*)
- (g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its tenth special session (*continued*)

In the absence of Ms. Ogwu (Nigeria), Mr. Metelitsa (Belarus), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 38: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (continued) (A/C.2/63/L.5)

Draft resolution on the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

1. **Mr. Tag-Eldin** (Egypt) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.5, noting that the text was similar to the previous year's resolution, with some technical updates in the first preambular paragraph and paragraph 8, and minor changes in the thirteenth and fourteenth preambular paragraphs. He looked forward to the adoption of the resolution by consensus and hoped that it would contribute to alleviating the hardships of the Palestinian people under occupation.

Agenda item 49: Sustainable development (continued) (A/C.2/63/L.2/Rev.1 and A/C.2/63/L.3/Rev.1)

Draft resolution on the International Year of Chemistry

2. **Mr. Yoseph** (Ethiopia) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.2/Rev.1 and called on Member States to adopt it by consensus.

3. **The Chairperson** said that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt and Sierra Leone had joined the list of sponsors.

Draft resolution on the reliable and stable transit of energy and its role in ensuring sustainable development and international cooperation

4. **Ms. Ataeva** (Turkmenistan) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.3/Rev.1, which she hoped would constitute the first step towards a broad, multifaceted dialogue on the importance of reliable and stable transit of energy for the entire world. The resolution had no budget implications and she urged Member States to adopt it by consensus.

Agenda item 53: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (continued)

(b) Industrial development cooperation (continued) (A/C.2/63/L.6)

Draft resolution on industrial development cooperation

5. **Ms. Greenaway** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.6 and urged Member States to adopt it by consensus.

Agenda item 54: Operational activities for development (continued) (A/C.2/63/L.4)

Draft resolution on operational activities for development

6. **Ms. Greenaway** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/63/L.4 and said she hoped it would be adopted by consensus.

Agenda item 49: Sustainable development (continued) (A/63/66, A/63/76-E/2008/54 and A/63/225)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (continued) (A/63/304; A/C.2/63/3)

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (continued) (A/63/296 and A/63/297)

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (continued) (A/63/347 and A/63/351)

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind (continued) (A/63/294; A/C.2/63/3)

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (continued) (A/63/294; A/C.2/63/3)

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity (continued) (A/63/294; A/C.2/63/3)

(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its tenth special session (continued) (A/63/25)

7. **Mr. Shukla** (India) said that an integrated approach to sustainable development was key to ensuring development goals, particularly the eradication of poverty and hunger. The full implementation of Agenda 21 and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development was of the utmost importance.

8. India recognized the special challenges facing small island developing States and had contributed to those States' development efforts in the areas of capacity-building, natural disaster preparedness and adaptation to climate change. Above all, small island developing States needed further financial and technical support from developed countries. He also supported further strengthening of the Small Island Developing States Unit within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

9. India had taken a number of measures to ensure ecologically sustainable development, including the adoption of an ambitious national plan of action on climate change. Even as the country pursued economic growth, it remained committed to keeping per capita greenhouse gas emissions below those of developed countries.

10. The adverse effects of climate change could be overcome only through a collaborative global effort. Developing countries faced the most difficult challenges and were also the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The international community must therefore address climate change on the basis of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and must take account of the historical responsibility of developed countries.

11. He reiterated his Government's support for the multilateral negotiations taking place under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and said that the outcome must be fair and equitable. Developed countries must undertake bolder emission reduction commitments and assist developing countries with technology transfer and financing, without diverting funds meant for development. Greater international support was also needed to support developing countries' adaptation efforts.

12. Technology transfer was particularly important in providing developing countries with critical climate-related technologies at concessional rates. In order to effectively deal with the effects of climate change, the international community must be willing to balance rewards for innovators with the common good for all people, and introduce necessary flexibilities in the intellectual property rights regime.

13. The conservation, protection and sustainable use of genetic resources were important aspects of sustainable development. In that connection, he reiterated India's support of the Convention on Biological Diversity and welcomed the decision taken at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to adopt a clear road map for an international regime on access to genetic resources and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their use. Such a regime should include provisions for the mandatory disclosure of the country of origin of genetic resources and prior informed consent in intellectual property rights applications.

14. **Ms. Valiente** (Cuba) said that, despite developing countries' significant efforts to meet environmental goals, they continued to face major obstacles, including the lack of financial resources and limited access to new technologies. Rich countries failed to show the necessary political will to support poorer countries and continued to squander resources. It was now clear that their models of society, based on excessive consumption, were not only economically unviable but environmentally unsustainable.

15. Turning to the issue of climate change, she said that small island developing States should give high priority to adaptation measures; however, they lacked the capacity to carry out the necessary research and actions to minimize the impacts of climate change. The international community should provide support to such States, according to their needs and priorities.

16. To combat the grave consequences of climate change, countries should make concrete commitments in the framework of negotiations for a post-2012 climate agreement. She looked forward to the establishment of new binding targets of between 20 and 40 per cent in the reduction of emissions for 2020 and between 60 and 70 per cent for 2050. However, such targets must not be imposed on developing countries and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities must not be ignored.

17. She expressed her Government's support for the Brazilian initiative to convene an international conference in 2012, when 20 years would have elapsed since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio, and to review the implementation of the commitments made, as well as to assess the progress made towards the goals agreed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg. Such a conference would be an opportunity for the international community to reaffirm its commitment to the guiding principles of environmental sustainability and sustainable development, and to agree on concrete actions in order to achieve the objectives agreed.

18. **Mr. Wolfe** (Jamaica) said that the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/63/351) pointed to the increasing frequency of natural disasters and the exorbitant costs for the countries concerned in Asia. Future reports of the Secretary-General should also assess the impact of natural disasters in the Caribbean region; in recent years, more than five major hurricanes had severely affected agriculture and tourism in that region. The situation underlined the extreme vulnerability of small island developing States to the impact of natural disasters, which threatened not only their development prospects but their very existence. Inevitably, the poorest and most vulnerable suffered most.

19. Disaster risk reduction efforts would have to address climate change, and the support of the international community was critical in view of the scale and magnitude of the challenges. Jamaica therefore supported the Secretary-General's recommendation that a major scaling-up of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action was required urgently. Disaster risk reduction should be included in the post-2012 framework, given the links between adaptation, disaster risk reduction and development.

20. Jamaica joined the calls for major emitters of greenhouse gases to significantly reduce emissions in keeping with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. It also supported the urgent pursuit of a second commitment period, considering that negotiations should be concluded before the 2009 meeting in Copenhagen in order to ensure a seamless transition from the first to the second period. Equally

critical was the provision of new financial resources and technology to assist developing countries with adaptation and mitigation strategies.

21. Lastly, priority should be given to strengthening the Small Island Developing States Unit, in recognition of the special needs and particular vulnerabilities of such States. The Unit was a key component of the overall efforts to implement the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States; the provision of increased, stable resources was therefore critical.

22. **Mr. Kwon** Hae-Ryong (Republic of Korea), referring to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/63/304), said it was imperative to ensure coordination and coherence among the environmental activities of the United Nations. His delegation believed that strengthening the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) would ensure better policy guidance and priorities, with a strong scientific base, technological support and capacity-building. The current global discussions on sustainable development issues, particularly the environmental aspects, were a positive sign and efforts should be accelerated, seeking common solutions and sharing lessons learned and best practices. Environmental sustainability should be a key factor in all efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

23. The current financial turmoil should not eclipse the urgency of matters such as climate change, desertification, loss of biodiversity and the energy and food crises, or hinder the efforts of the international community to achieve sustainable development and environmental protection. Nor should global economic issues derail the international community's efforts to fulfil its commitments and help achieve the Goals.

24. The next few years would be critical, and a world summit on the environment and sustainable development in 2012 would provide new momentum to the sustainable development process and the post-2012 climate regime by strengthening political commitments at the highest level. The Republic of Korea had

recently announced its desire to contribute by hosting the summit.

25. **Mr. Al-Fayez** (Saudi Arabia) said that, as an oil producer, his country endeavoured, while respecting the environment, to satisfy and improve access to energy services and supplies because of their importance in eradicating poverty and ensuring sustainable development. The United Nations was essential to the achievement of development goals, and the resolution of environmental and population problems must be a top priority for the Organization.

26. Saudi Arabia was a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol and believed that the development of energy technologies would constitute a major contribution to the resolution of many environmental problems, including climate change. The international community must adopt the appropriate measures to counteract such change and observe the principle of shared responsibility between developed and developing countries.

27. His delegation considered that the Committee's deliberations should not be limited to the most obvious challenges, but should also cover ways of improving implementation. Goals could be achieved only if the programmes of international agencies reflected the priorities of the countries that benefited therefrom and avoided duplication. He hoped that the discussions would lead to the adoption of practical policies for overcoming obstacles to sustainable development.

28. **Ms. Santizo Sandoval** (Guatemala) said that poverty eradication and development would not be achieved unless the world's natural resources were managed sustainably and preserved for future generations. Moreover, halfway towards the target date for achieving the MDGs, it was uncertain whether all developing countries would be able to achieve their Goals by 2015, while little progress had been made towards the target of achieving a significant reduction in the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010. The time was ripe for returning to the path towards development and reaffirming the commitments that had led to the establishment of the Goals.

29. The General Assembly should send a clear signal to the international community that poverty should be eradicated without exhausting the earth's natural resources. The sixteenth session of the Commission for Sustainable Development had analyzed best practices,

obstacles and possible policies in relation to issues that were fundamental for resolving constructively the challenges faced by decision makers throughout the world. The Commission's work should inspire the draft resolution on implementation of Agenda 21 and guide the coming negotiations.

30. The Association of Caribbean States was working to strengthen regional cooperation, and had drawn up an action plan to respond to the unique challenges faced by the Caribbean Sea countries. The support of the General Assembly was required in order to obtain recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development. That recognition would strengthen the Association's efforts, especially to obtain technical and financial cooperation and for the design of joint projects.

31. On the issue of climate change, the Bali Road Map was a step in the right direction. However, much remained to be done to follow up the Kyoto Protocol, in particular negotiation of further commitments that reflected the common but differentiated responsibilities. The draft resolution should acknowledge the measures being taken under the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the only forum that could take the necessary decisions to confront that phenomenon.

32. Latin America and the Caribbean were increasingly being affected by drought and desertification and prompt and effective actions should be taken to combat soil degradation. The issue of rural and agricultural development in developing countries had been restored to the international development cooperation agenda, and the deliberations of the General Assembly and all subsequent meetings of intergovernmental forums devoted to development should accord real priority to the matter.

33. **Mr. Al-Murbati** (Bahrain) said that his country's endeavours in the field of sustainable development were in accordance with all the applicable resolutions and that it took an active part in international activities aimed at removing obstacles to such development. Bahrain had a high level of education and human development, was very successful in attracting foreign direct investment, and was planning to liberalize and modernize its economy with a view to attracting sustainable industries and economic activities. In 2008, Bahrain had hosted the Economic and Social Council regional preparatory meeting on sustainable urbanization. The private sector, banks and financial

institutions had been encouraged to support sustainable development in the developing countries and the Islamic Development Bank had allocated \$10 billion to that end.

34. Bahrain was reviewing its social services infrastructure, activating the forces of civil society, updating its legal and administrative framework and focusing on social equality and decentralization. It had contributed \$1 million in support of the assessment report on disaster risk reduction that would be launched in Manama in 2009, and in November 2008 it would host a conference on energy and climate change as part of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue Initiative.

35. **Mr. Bakyono** (Burkina Faso) said that the recent natural disasters across the globe illustrated the need for urgent action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate. A Road Map had been adopted in Bali in 2007, and efforts to maintain the impetus should continue.

36. Drought and desertification were jeopardizing supplies of food and water in many countries, especially in Africa, and the consequences shed light on the combined effects of poverty and environmental degradation. His delegation therefore welcomed the adoption of the 10-year strategic plan and framework (2008-2018) under the Convention to Combat Desertification aimed at establishing a global partnership to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development.

37. Sustainable land development, increased agricultural productivity of arid land, soil restoration, and the application of measures to attenuate and adapt to the effects of climate change should be among the priorities considered during the next cycle for reconstituting the resources of the Global Environmental Fund. The conclusions of the most recent session of the Commission on Sustainable Development highlighting those issues could be useful in that regard.

38. The achievement of sustainable development called for the collaboration of all States to lessen the effects of human activities on the climate and to facilitate the implementation of the relevant projects and programmes. Burkina Faso therefore called on those States that had not already done so to ratify the key Conventions, which were essential pillars of the MDGs.

39. Regarding desertification, a baseline should be established with a view to monitoring the situation and attention should be paid to ecosystems, especially in arid regions, in the context of preserving the environment and attenuating the impact of climate change. The issue of financing for implementation of the relevant international agreements was also crucial, especially for the countries most affected by the impact of climate change, which concerned the very survival of some sectors of the population.

40. **Mr. Ould Abderrahmane** (Mauritania) said that it remained unlikely that most of the developing countries would achieve the MDGs by the agreed target date, especially in the light of the current challenges, which included the rising price of food, the crisis in the global financial market and climate change. He hoped that the richer countries would not allow those challenges to affect the commitment they had made to finance development in the developing countries: economic and social development and environmental protection were essential to sustainable development. The failure of the Doha Round was regrettable, and he asked the industrialized countries to show greater flexibility and a stronger political will to overcome the obstacles to agreement.

41. Mauritania was doing everything in its power to eradicate poverty and provide greater access to education and health services. However, without the help of its development partners, its achievements would be limited. His country, already arid, was at constant risk from desertification, and he therefore called upon the international community to adopt a determined stand against climate change. A further persistent challenge was plagues of locusts, which regularly devastated the country's agriculture, constituting a danger equal to any other environmental disaster. Much greater assistance was needed with that problem, particularly in view of the global food crisis.

42. **Ms. Espinosa** (Ecuador) said that the sustainable development targets could clearly be affected by the financial, food and energy crises and the unprecedented impacts of climate change, which, added to the failure of some developed countries to comply with their official development assistance (ODA) commitments, could jeopardize implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Consequently, the General Assembly should tackle the causes of the grave crises affecting the global community directly,

and identify solutions that benefited all, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.

43. Greenhouse gases emitted mostly by the developed countries were a major cause of climate changes that were triggering disasters particularly affecting the developing countries, which required ever-increasing resources to mitigate the effects. Ecuador reiterated its commitment to strengthening the international regime to combat climate change and to playing an active part in negotiations under the Bali Action Plan to achieve a new international regime. The impact of climate change could be combated only by the commitment of the international community to implement mitigation and adaptation programmes; accordingly, all countries that had not done so, but especially the industrialized countries, should conclude and ratify the respective international conventions and join the effort to save humanity and the planet.

44. Ecuador was implementing the Yasuni Initiative, forgoing oil exploration in one of the areas with the greatest biodiversity on the planet. As a result, income from oil exports would be greatly reduced over the coming years and, while Ecuador was willing to make the sacrifice, it urged the international community to assume its responsibility by granting a minimum compensation. Such action would provide an extraordinary example of the world's commitment to reducing global warming, mitigating the impact of climate change and supporting developing countries in their efforts to achieve sustainability.

45. Natural disasters had increased alarmingly in recent years, with devastating effects, especially in developing countries. It was therefore significant that the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction had been strengthened recently; the second session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in June 2009, should continue providing strategic guidance and coherence for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework. Ecuador had recently suffered devastating flooding as an effect of La Niña; it asked the international community to support the International Centre for Research on the El Niño Phenomenon, whose mission was to improve understanding of the phenomenon, develop an early warning system and provide key information on the potential medium-term effects on the countries concerned.

46. The challenges of sustainable development should be included in the analysis of the current crises and the formulation of responses; in addition, any new financial architecture should take into account the need to protect the environment. The crisis could be patched over so that the system continued operating as it had to date, or the opportunity could be used to build models that learned from the crisis and understood that market interests and speculation should not take precedence over the interests of human beings and that growth for growth's sake led to the destruction of the necessary equilibrium between production, the market, the State, society and nature.

47. **Mr. Guillén** (Peru) said that Peru was extremely concerned about the impact of climate change on the stability, development and well-being to which mankind aspired. The increased intensity and frequency of the El Niño phenomenon had severely affected Peru's diverse ecosystems, causing major social and economic damage, and threatening its incalculable biodiversity. Climate change was a global problem and called for coordinated action by the whole international community, in accordance with the agreed legal framework and the underlying principles, especially that of common but differentiated responsibilities. Accordingly, the discussions on climate change should be carried out within the context of sustainable development, promoting its three pillars in an integrated, coordinated and balanced manner.

48. Concrete measures should be taken to limit the emission of greenhouse gases and, in that regard, priority should be given to implementing the commitments assumed under the Framework Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. Development programmes were interrelated with initiatives to combat climate change; the United Nations system thus had a fundamental role to play in actively promoting compliance with the objectives of the Convention. The developed countries must lead the effort since they bore the main responsibility for the problem. No reasonable agreement could be reached until programmes were proposed that were designed to modify current patterns of consumption and industrialization, based on a sustainable development approach.

49. The Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, should be taken into account when tackling issues related to climate

change; when managed sustainably, the land could contribute to adaptation to climate change and mitigation of its effects. His Government had therefore requested support for preliminary studies leading to the establishment of strategic partnerships to implement the Convention in Peru, where the process of desertification had both natural and human causes.

50. Global warming was a fact, and the frequency and intensity of severe events would increase, particularly droughts, flooding and extreme temperatures. Moreover, the developing countries and, particularly their poorest people, were exposed to disproportionate risks. Risk reduction policies provided a first line of defence for adaptation to climate change and Peru had been taking the necessary measures to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action. It was also establishing a national disaster reduction platform and assessing the potential impact of climate change on strategic factors such as water, energy, transport and agriculture, within the framework of national development policies. Lastly, stable financial resources must be ensured for the International Disaster Reduction Strategy, in view of its increased responsibilities, and Member States should be encouraged to ensure coherence and synergy between the climate change and risk reduction agendas.

51. **Mr. Muller** (Marshall Islands) said that, although considerable progress had been made in transforming the Commission for Sustainable Development into a meaningful review mechanism, its session too often got bogged down in prepared statements. Small island developing States should be given a greater role in the planning and coordination of the Commission. At the same time, there should be not only increased funding but also more effective interaction between Permanent Missions of those States and the relevant United Nations offices, including the Unit in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

52. Traditional economic indicators might not reveal the full vulnerability of the economies of small island developing States, which not only faced the challenges of climate change but were also handicapped by limited economies of scale and geographical remoteness. Environmental vulnerability should be factored into their economic indicators. Consideration should be given to the question of how the United

Nations system could create more accessible funding mechanisms serving the particular needs of each country, mitigate the effects of climate change and rising sea levels on sustainable development, assist countries in incorporating strategies of adaptation into their national planning and strengthen cooperation in support of the sustainable development of small island developing States. There should also be a better balance between regional information-sharing and action focusing on individual States. Too often, workshops were held without obvious results. The memorandum of understanding between Italy, Austria, the city of Milan and the Pacific small island developing States might serve as a model to other partners.

53. The Micronesia Challenge aimed to conserve the region's vulnerable coastal and land resources by 2020. It was one of the world's most ambitious conservation goals, designed to minimize harm from coastal erosion and strengthen traditional communities. It could, however, succeed only through international collaboration and sustained funding. Since the Marshall Islands had an average elevation of only two metres above sea level, climate change posed a threat not simply to the country's development but to its very existence. Although the basic facts had been known for two decades, the United Nations system and Member States had yet to acknowledge or mobilize around the existential threat posed by climate change. The impact on the Islands' water supply, food security, public health and marine fisheries might be acute. The Government was treating the issue as an urgent domestic priority, but it could not deal with it alone. The time for procedural resolutions, which paid lip service to the problem but led to no action, had passed.

54. The effects of climate change were still not a standard feature of environmental impact assessments, even though approximately 100 States had unilaterally adopted legislation on the issue. Clearly, more information sharing and a stronger focus on the implementation of climate-change strategies in all development sectors were required. His delegation urged the international community to honour its long-standing promises to States such as his own.

55. **Mr. Borg** (Malta) said that the protection of the world's climate was an essential feature of sustainable development. The challenges posed by climate change were complex and threatened progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. As the initiator of

General Assembly resolution 43/53, entitled "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind", his delegation understood well that the effects of climate change were global, transcending continents and the divisions between North and South, developing or developed countries. The capacity of small islands like Malta to cope with rising sea levels and natural disasters, which were increasing in frequency, was being drastically tested.

56. Every effort should be made to mitigate and adapt to the predicted negative impacts of climate change. Malta was therefore working with other European Union member States on attaining the targets set in the Union's climate and energy package. In that context, he welcomed the joint declaration of the Paris summit for the Mediterranean, which through the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean could play an important role in addressing the challenges facing the region. Action at the regional level could include collaboration on such sectors as renewable, clean and efficient technologies, including the wider use of solar energy and offshore wind farms.

57. In Malta itself, the newly established Climate Change Committee was undertaking consultations with various governmental and non-governmental bodies, developing policies and launching a sustained education campaign aimed at the population at large. In February 2008, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had, jointly with the DiploFoundation, organized an international conference on climate change diplomacy, which had discussed innovative diplomatic processes. The Conference had also served as a launch pad for a training programme on climate change diplomacy, in which 20 officials from small island developing States would be participating, the first of 100 participants.

58. **Ms. Bruell-Melchior** (Monaco) said that Prince Albert II, who was committed to environmental protection and sustainable development in countries of both South and North, had concluded agreements to promote biodiversity in the Arctic, preserve water resources in sub-Saharan Africa, maintain the Agreement on the Conservation of Gorillas and Their Habitats, encourage awareness-raising campaigns in a number of countries and develop sustainable tourism. Monaco, which looked forward to the high-level special meeting to celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010 and supported the negotiation process set out in the Bali Road Map, had signed a bilateral five-year agreement on clean development

with Tunisia, under which Monaco would support three renewable energy projects, in accordance with the Clean Development Mechanism: electrification and drinking water in rural areas, low-energy public lighting and the solar drying of phosphates. All three projects would be beneficial for both environmental and social development.

59. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, was relevant not only to climate change but also to the current food crisis. Her delegation fully supported the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Convention should be used as an instrument for increasing food production by reclaiming dry and degraded land.

60. As a member of the Commission on Sustainable Development, Monaco would be in favour of making the next session more action-orientated, with the focus on technology transfer and capacity-building for the developing countries. More should also be done to use the resources of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, with a more explicit acknowledgement of the link between adaptation to climate change and disaster prevention.

61. **Mr. Biya** (Cameroon) said that his Government was deeply committed to sustainable development, bearing in mind the close link between environmental degradation and famine, poverty and disease. Its policy was therefore to strengthen environmental management, improve living conditions, mitigate the impact of the industrial sector on the environment and public health, conserve the country's biodiversity, rehabilitate polluted areas, prevent threats to the environment, strengthen cooperation, combat HIV/AIDS in the environment sector and mainstream gender into environmental policy. Cameroon also participated in the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the environment section of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the Central African Forest Commission.

62. Forests, which covered 42 per cent of the national territory, were a crucial part of Cameroon's economic development. Forestry resources accounted for 11 per cent of gross domestic product and 20 per cent of its foreign currency. The forestry sector had almost 22,000 employees officially and many more unofficially. The Governments had created forest reserves and undertaken reforestation. In the interests of biological diversity, it had set up a national network of protected

areas, covering 18 per cent of the national territory. Its policy contributed significantly to the regulation of the world's climate system, the preservation of biological diversity and the fight against desertification. His delegation therefore called for greater support from the international community in recognition of Cameroon's conservation efforts, which had been undertaken for the general interest, at the cost of the resources necessary for its development. Both financial and technological assistance was required, if sustainable development was to be achieved in the developing countries. In that context, his delegation welcomed the adoption of the ten-year strategic plan and framework by the Conference on the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification. It also supported the proposal made by Algeria at the tenth special session of the UNEP Governing Council in February 2008 that the years 2010-2020 should be declared the international decade of combating climate change.

63. **Mr. Ali** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his country had incorporated sustainable development policies into its national development strategy, focusing on the three pillars of sustainable development. While it had made good progress in many aspects of sustainable development, the Syrian Arab Republic, in common with other developing countries, was severely affected by the current global challenges, including climate change, and large parts of the country were at constant risk of desertification. He believed that the developed countries should be more aware of the risk posed by that problem and of the link between climate change and poverty, and honour their commitments under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

64. The oil slick on Lebanese shores caused by the Israeli bombardment in July 2006 had affected the whole Lebanese coast and had had grave environmental and economic consequences. It had also devastated much of the Syrian coastline. His Government had successfully dealt with the pollution without any international assistance, but reserved its right to estimate the cost of the clean-up. In its resolution 62/188, the General Assembly had requested the Government of Israel to assume responsibility for prompt and adequate compensation to the Government of Lebanon and other countries directly affected by the oil slick for the costs of repairing the environmental damage caused by the destruction, including the restoration of the marine environment. The report of

the Secretary-General (A/63/225) made it clear that Israel had not responded to that request. His delegation therefore encouraged the international community to send a clear, strong message to Israel that it rejected such barbarous and irresponsible behaviour.

65. The continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory and the occupied Syrian Golan, the siege of Gaza and the strangulation of the Palestinian economy deprived the Palestinian people of its right to sustainable development. The extensive damage to the environment in occupied Palestine increased the suffering of the Palestinian people: lack of access to fuel in Gaza meant that sewage could not be treated and had to be discharged into the sea. After storms, raw sewage contaminated drinking water, causing a huge increase in disease. The occupying Power in the occupied Palestinian territory and the occupied Syrian Golan was systematically destroying the agriculture that represented the main source of the population's income, denied Palestinian farmers access to water and their own land, and continued to appropriate land for settlements and military bases. Furthermore, Israel was burying nuclear waste in the occupied Syrian Golan with total disregard for its grave environmental impact. The international community should bring pressure to bear on Israel to end its occupation of Arab territory. No form of development could be realized by the Palestinian people while living under occupation.

66. **Mr. Tarragó** (Brazil) said that the General Assembly should provide ongoing political guidance on the implementation of Agenda 21. Moreover, an appropriate review should be undertaken under the Assembly's authority. Such a review would be needed by 2012. The meeting would provide an opportunity to review the implementation of decisions and recommendations adopted since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and assess progress made on international environmental guidance.

67. Despite progress in many areas, such challenges as environmental degradation were jeopardizing efforts to attain the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. In 1993, the Assembly had requested the Economic and Social Council to set up a Commission on Sustainable Development to monitor and review progress in the implementation of Agenda 21. The Commission had fulfilled its role more than adequately and with increasing success. However, the current global crises demonstrated that business as

usual was not an option. Efforts must be redoubled and sustainable development promoted at the highest levels. The proposed 2012 review would build on the work of the Commission, which would continue to meet according to its programme of work; provide an opportunity for a midterm appraisal of the Commission's work cycle; and be an important stepping stone towards the MDG review conference to be held in 2015.

68. In that connection, he reiterated Brazil's offer to host a "Rio+20 conference" in 2012. Guided by the "spirit of Rio", the conference would provide the political impetus needed to bridge the implementation deficit and to forge consensus in areas requiring further efforts and additional resources. Moreover, as a diverse country that was committed to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, Brazil would provide a stimulating environment for discussions. Lastly, holding the summit in Rio de Janeiro would be highly symbolic.

69. **Mr. Porretti** (Argentina) said that the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action should be accelerated as a matter of urgency. He welcomed the efforts of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction secretariat in that regard. Following the success of the first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Geneva in June 2007, his delegation looked forward to the Global Platform's second session, to be held in June 2009.

70. The Strategy secretariat had worked hard to promote synergies between disaster risk reduction and climate change. The ministerial meeting on reducing disaster risks in a changing climate, hosted by the Secretary-General on 29 September 2008, had clearly demonstrated the international community's commitment to accelerating the implementation of disaster risk reduction through innovative and original solutions. Investment in disaster risk reduction reduced the impact of disasters, contributed to climate change adaptation and helped ensure that development gains were not reversed.

71. Lastly, his delegation agreed that the financing provisions for the Strategy secretariat should be revised to include assessed contributions, in order to secure a stable and predictable flow of resources to support the basic performance of the secretariat's key functions.

72. **Archbishop Migliore** (Observer for the Holy See) said that protecting the environment meant more

than defending it. It implied a more positive vision of the human being, where the latter was no longer a threat to the environment, but its steward. Viewed in that way, there was no conflict between the human being and the environment, but rather an inseparable alliance in which the environment essentially conditioned the human being's life and development, while the human being perfected the environment by his or her creative activity.

73. Ever since international law had begun to embrace global commons and shared ecosystems, new concepts had taken shape. Notwithstanding some difference of opinion as to their meaning and normative status, the principles of common heritage of mankind, State responsibility, common but differentiated responsibilities, and inter- and intra-generational equity had provided valuable perspectives and guidance for addressing the relationship between the environment, economic development and human rights. In the same vein, the principle of the responsibility to protect, though unable thus far to generate precise juridical norms itself, had been invoked as an essential aspect of the exercise of sovereignty at the national and international levels. Applying that principle to environmental issues provided an opportunity to reflect on different aspects that could help promote authentic human development.

74. The responsibility to protect the climate required synergies between food security and climate change to be strengthened, focusing on the centrality of the most vulnerable — often rural communities in developing countries — while respecting their culture and traditions. The responsibility to protect the climate should also be based on an alliance between the principles of subsidiarity and global solidarity. Recent global crises demonstrated the insufficiency of national resources and capacities and the need for collective action, while the climate change negotiations demonstrated the extent to which responsibility to protect, subsidiarity and global solidarity were intertwined. Furthermore, environmental questions and such issues as energy and the economy, peace and justice, national interests and international solidarity were inextricably linked.

75. Today's society would be unable to meet its responsibility to protect the environment unless people reviewed their lifestyles and consumption and production patterns. Moreover, the many challenges facing the world called for coordinated solutions based

on a coherent moral vision of the world. There was, therefore, an urgent need to educate people about ecological responsibility. Such education should entail a change in patterns of thinking and behaviour and be based on the value and dignity of the person.

76. **Mr. Khan** (Pakistan) said that the multiple challenges facing the world seriously threatened the sustainable development of developing countries. The global environment for economic development had become less favourable, reducing such countries' already limited policy space. The most notable negative trends included increasing volatility in international trade and finance; declining ODA, shrinking private financial flows and a concentration of foreign direct investment in a few countries; soaring food prices and volatile energy prices; mounting stress on natural resources and increased frequency of disasters; and the current impasse in the Doha Round.

77. Environmental protection continued to be held back by a lack of progress in the implementation of the Bali Action Plan, adopted at the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the third session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol; insufficient resources for combating desertification and land degradation; and increasingly frequent and severe natural disasters. He welcomed the fact that the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention had moved from exchanging ideas to making substantive proposals, but there were serious doubts about the prospect of reaching an agreed outcome by December 2009. The factors impeding progress must be addressed.

78. Although Pakistan was a low greenhouse gas emitter, climate change was causing irrevocable damage to the country, with considerable social, environmental and economic consequences. The Himalayan glaciers might even disappear by 2035. Recent studies suggested that South Asia was the region most affected by climate change. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, millions in the region would be affected by increased precipitation intensity, rainfall variability, risk of floods, land degradation and water stress. An agreed outcome that enhanced implementation of the Climate Change Convention was imperative.

79. His Government would continue to engage constructively with the Climate Change Convention process in developing a shared vision on long-term cooperative action. Such a vision must be based on compliance with the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol; measurable, reportable and verifiable measures on the part of annex I countries aided by enhanced voluntary actions by developing countries; scientific evidence and the prospect of sustainable development in developing countries; common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, inter-generational equity and historical responsibility; and the establishment of an effective institutional architecture for technology development and transfer, predictable financial flows and a mechanism to enable, support, facilitate and implement adaptation actions in developing countries. His Government was prepared to undertake enhanced voluntary actions at the national level in the area of mitigation, provided it received incentives on finance, technology transfer and capacity-building.

80. An inclusive global order must combine economic growth with social development. As capital fled, markets plunged, currencies tumbled and confidence evaporated, social development had crumbled. The huge current account deficit in developing countries was wiping out years of savings, forcing Governments to divert precious resources from social development projects.

81. The challenge of sustainable development had become far too large for any one country to tackle alone. The United Nations had a key role to play, particularly by advancing the global sustainable development agenda to meet new and emerging challenges. A coordinated response aimed at stopping and reversing negative trends was essential in that regard.

82. **Mr. Ogunnaike** (Nigeria) said that climate change posed a major threat to development and a serious danger to the survival of millions of people around the world. The recent global crises only increased the urgency of addressing climate change in a comprehensive and effective manner. The challenges arising from those crises had far-reaching consequences. Any attempt to address them required an integrated and balanced approach tailored to each country's needs.

83. His Government remained committed to achieving sustainable development and, in recognition of the linkage between sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals, had intensified its efforts to implement the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development by incorporating the objectives contained therein into Nigeria's national development strategy.

84. His delegation understood the concerns relating to small island developing States' increased vulnerability to the effects of climate change. He was pleased that support for the design and implementation of national sustainable development strategies in small island developing States would continue in the Pacific and that the possibility of pursuing similar projects in the other regions would be actively explored. Proper attention should also be paid to the challenges of capacity.

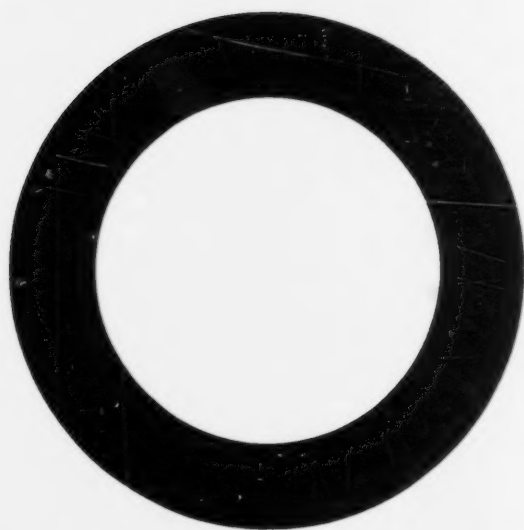
85. He welcomed the description of the impact of disasters on lives, property and livelihoods contained in the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/63/351). The recommendations contained therein would strengthen cooperation through existing mechanisms, foster coherence and synergies between climate change and disaster risk reduction, boost investment in disaster risk reduction, and strengthen the Strategy secretariat.

86. Drought, desertification and soil erosion in many parts of Africa had resulted in land degradation and crop failure on a massive scale. There was an urgent need for greater efforts to stop Lake Chad and the River Niger drying up. International assistance to the subregion should be increased. The measures adopted by his Government to combat desertification and drought included the green wall for the Sahara programme, integrated ecosystem management in the transboundary areas of Nigeria and the Niger, and a programme to conserve sand dunes.

87. He welcomed the outcome of the tenth special session of the UNEP Governing Council, particularly the decisions relating to the Medium-term Strategy for the period 2010-2013: chemicals management, including mercury and waste management; the international decade for addressing climate change; and the Global Environment Outlook: environment for development.

88. Lastly, he expressed appreciation to the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly for their vision in drawing attention to climate change. Hopefully, that vision would translate into the adoption of a comprehensive and inclusive agreement on a post-2012 climate change regime in Copenhagen in 2009. In that regard, it was his hope that industrialized countries would make a far-reaching commitment to reduce emissions, facilitate clean and renewable energy technology transfer, and provide financing and capacity-building in support of developing countries' adaptation strategies.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.



**General Assembly**

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Second Committee**Summary record of the 20th meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 28 October 2008, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Andrei Metelitsa (Vice-Chairperson) (Belarus)
later: Ms. Ogwu (Chairperson) (Nigeria)

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Agenda item 50: Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

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In the absence of Ms. Ogwu (Nigeria), Mr. Metelitsa (Belarus), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 49: Sustainable development (*continued*)
(A/63/66, A/63/225 and A/63/76-E/2008/54)

- (a) **Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development** (*continued*) (A/63/304 and A/C.2/63/3)
- (b) **Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States** (*continued*) (A/63/296 and A/63/297)
- (c) **International Strategy for Disaster Reduction** (*continued*) (A/63/347 and A/63/351)
- (d) **Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind** (*continued*) (A/63/294 and A/C.2/63/3)
- (e) **Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa** (*continued*) (A/63/294 and A/C.2/63/3)
- (f) **Convention on Biological Diversity** (*continued*) (A/63/294 and A/C.2/63/3)
- (g) **Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its tenth special session** (*continued*) (A/63/25)

1. **Mr. Clough** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) said that the Committee's discussion of sustainable development was particularly relevant to his organization's core goal of promoting economic growth in developing countries and economies in transition in a sustainable manner. It was important to tackle obstacles to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in an integrated and coordinated manner.

2. UNIDO had concluded that it was best able to contribute to medium- and long-term solutions to the global food crisis through technical and advisory

cooperation to boost agricultural production and encouragement of adoption of post-harvest technologies to increase storage capabilities and marketability. It had developed partnerships with a number of international financial institutions with a view to expanding its agribusiness activities. It was encouraging cleaner and more efficient resource use by promoting recycling, discouraging use of hazardous and toxic materials, emphasizing the sale of services over the sale of products, and encouraging a shift from non-renewable to renewable energy sources. It had collaborated with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to establish a network of cleaner production centres and had received an award for its work in phasing out ozone-depleting substances in developing countries.

3. Climate protection activities should focus on the industrial sector, which accounted for one third of global primary energy consumption and carbon emissions. Clean energy use must be emphasized in developing countries, where access to energy was a key component of economic growth and poverty reduction. In that connection, UNIDO had been closely involved in a major programme in West Africa to increase the use of renewable energy and promote energy efficiency in industry and households.

4. **Mr. Dall'Oglio** (Observer for the International Organization for Migration (IOM)), said that in small island developing States, impacts of climate change were increasing migration from outer islands and hinterlands to urban areas. Not only did environmental factors have an impact on migration, but migration in turn had an impact on the environment. In collaboration with the United Nations University (UNU) and with the sponsorship of the Rockefeller Foundation, IOM had commissioned seven studies that together would comprise a state-of-the-art review of the relationship between migration and the environment. It was also working with UNEP, UNU and the Munich Re Foundation to establish a climate change, environment and migration alliance to be launched at the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties Serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, to be held in late November, with a view to enhancing collaboration among stakeholders in all sectors to incorporate

migration considerations into environment, development and climate change agendas.

5. IOM was also working with refugee and displaced persons organizations. The overall goal was to gain recognition of migration as a potential adaptation to climate change while increasing the resilience of vulnerable populations to environmental impacts. He was glad to see increasing recognition of the linkages between climate change and migration, exemplified by the inclusion of the climate change, migration and development nexus as a potential focus of the Global Forum on Migration and Development to be held in Greece the following year.

6. **Mr. Colmenares** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had begun to create a new model of sustainable development — a socialist and humanistic model that took into account the potentialities and environmental characteristics of each geographical region of the country. Sustainable development was at the heart of his country's efforts to attain the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. In that context, it had launched its "sowing the seeds of oil" initiative, under which oil revenues were allocated to national and regional social programmes and clean energy was used to construct communications systems within the framework of an endogenous development plan.

7. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela urged governments, international and regional organizations within the Economic and Social Council, the funds and programmes, regional commissions and specialized agencies of the United Nations, the Global Environment Facility and other intergovernmental organizations to adopt measures to ensure the effective application and follow-up of the outcome of the World Summit for Sustainable Development and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and to submit reports on the actual progress made.

8. The environmental and climate change regime set out in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol was sufficiently flexible to match the varying situations and capacities of each country and should be maintained for the long term. The Bali Roadmap which proposed some ways to amplify compliance with the commitments laid down in the Convention, was not a new agreement. It called on industrialized nations to

observe the first period of commitment and to define the targets of the second.

9. **Ms. Morake** (Botswana) said that, in the context of the current food, energy and climate crises, the United Nations must accord equal priority to the three pillars of sustainable development and to ensure the proper coordination of its actions. The international community should therefore scale up its efforts to address the interrelated challenges of sustainable agricultural development which, by extension, included poverty in rural Africa. It must also demonstrate the political will necessary to implement the commitments entered into under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol.

10. Her country was doing its part through the formulation of a comprehensive economic strategy for the implementation of its obligations under multilateral environmental agreements, its involvement in the clean development mechanism and the Air Pollution Information Network in Africa, and the intensification of pollution monitoring networks in the urban areas and other population centres. However, developing countries such as Botswana needed increased financial and technical resources to strengthen their climate change prevention, adaptation and mitigation efforts. Those obligations were being mainstreamed into the tenth national development plan for the period 2009-2016.

11. In recent years Botswana had experienced erratic rains, prolonged droughts and extreme temperatures, which had had a negative impact on human health and on food security. Her delegation therefore welcomed the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (2008-2018) and looked forward to the accelerated implementation of the Convention, especially in Africa.

12. There was a critical need for coherence and synergy among the Rio Conventions, including the harmonization of their programmes. In addition, the assistance provided to countries should not be fragmented but should instead be designed to enhance complementarity among the Conventions.

13. Lastly, her Government supported the efforts to strengthen international environmental governance and welcomed the leadership role of UNEP in that regard.

14. **Mr. Berguño** (Chile) welcomed the offer by Brazil to host a "Rio + 20" summit and wished also to reiterate Chile's support for the small island developing States. Itself a victim of climate change, which had caused melting of the country's glaciers, damage to its entire water network, and droughts and erratic rains, Chile truly understood how climate change affected countries which, as the representative of the Marshall Islands had said, were sometimes only 2 metres above sea level.

15. **Mr. Batjargal** (World Meteorological Organization (WMO)) drew attention to the third World Climate Conference, to be held in Geneva from 31 August to 4 September 2009, which would consider scientific advances in seasonal, inter-annual and multi-decadal climate predictions and promote their practical application. Better climate prediction information could open up new opportunities to policymakers in such areas as water and agricultural management, disaster mitigation and response, urban planning and energy production. The Conference aimed to ensure that effective climate services were available to enable everyone to adapt to and plan for climate change, thereby strengthening regional and national capabilities at all levels. That task was all the more urgent in view of the expected increase in the frequency and intensity of climate-related hazards. Only by reducing such threats could the international community hope to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, particularly the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.

16. *Ms. Ogwu (Nigeria), Chairperson, took the Chair.*

Agenda item 50: Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (A/63/291, A/63/353 and E/2008/64)

17. **Ms. Tibaijuka** (Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (Habitat I) (A/63/291), and the report of the Secretary-General on coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda (E/2008/64), said that the underlying threat to all of the current global crises was rapid and chaotic

urbanization. Half the world's population was already living in cities, and by 2030 that proportion would reach two thirds. While cities produced most of the world's economic growth, they also contributed disproportionately to energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. In the North, urbanization was encroaching on agriculture, while the South was witnessing an explosion of informal and unplanned settlements and slums that relied primarily on biomass for energy, resulting in deforestation, pollution, and contamination of water and food supplies.

18. The sub-prime mortgage crisis was intimately linked to rapid urbanization. The crisis had resulted from the belief that market mechanisms could provide housing to all income groups, and it was paradoxical that massive public sector intervention had been required to restore trust in the markets. Keynes had resurfaced and was bound to replace Milton Friedman. Nevertheless, although not neglected completely as it had been in the past, housing finance still did not occupy its appropriate place on the development agenda, and she strongly recommended the convening of a special session of the General Assembly to discuss the role of government in housing finance systems.

19. She highlighted a number of items in the two reports, including the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for 2008-2013, which had made substantial progress in streamlining operations and maximizing efficiency, but was still in need of additional resources to be fully implemented. She drew attention to her organization's advocacy efforts, which would be spearheaded by the Global Campaign on Sustainable Urbanization to begin the following week at the fourth session of the World Urban Forum in Nanjing, China. Another focus was pre-investment capacity-building, which included, among other things, innovative but low-risk housing finance. With the aim of taking a more holistic approach to the social, economic and environmental aspects of urbanization, UN-Habitat was forging strategic partnerships with other United Nations specialized agencies. Its regional efforts were focused on water and sanitation and consolidating relationships with international and regional financial institutions around the world. Six of its eight pilot country programmes had achieved positive outcomes in incorporating urbanization-related issues into national and United Nations planning documents. That success was due to the work of national Habitat Programme Managers, who had

generally not been treated equitably by the United Nations system. She urged the Committee to recommend that there be no differentiation between international and senior national staff in United Nations country teams.

20. **Ms. Greenaway** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, observed that the United Nations Human Settlements Programme played a unique and key role in the overall pursuit of sustainable development, with the Habitat Agenda being a significant component of the broader agenda of internationally agreed development goals. Since a key factor in achieving sustainable development was managing cities and urban sprawl in a sustainable manner, the efforts of UN-Habitat to deepen the international community's understanding of the impact of rapid urbanization were encouraging.

21. Recent trends in human settlements, including increasing urbanization and growing mega-cities, heightened the need to focus on implementing the Habitat Agenda, in particular as it related to Millennium Development Goal 7 and its targets of halving by 2015 the number of people living without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation and of achieving by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of 100 million slum dwellers. The Secretary-General's report (A/63/291) indicated that the current energy and food crises were likely to exacerbate an already growing trend of urban inequality, significantly compounding the socio-economic challenges already faced by the millions of poor people living in urban areas. The Group of 77 and China urged UN-Habitat to continue monitoring that situation with the aim of helping to reverse the trend.

22. Meeting the Habitat Agenda goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development would require an integrated approach based on nationally owned strategies covering full and productive employment and decent work for all; access to safe water and sanitation; poverty eradication; the provision of modern, affordable energy services; and waste collection and disposal. In particular, the Group of 77 and China emphasized the importance of meeting the target on water and sanitation under Goal 7 of the MDGs, noting that the current year's review session of the Commission on Sustainable Development had not adequately echoed and supported the priority given to water and sanitation in developing countries' national development plans and poverty reduction strategies.

There was scope for UN-Habitat to play a greater role in that area, within its specific mandate and through the implementation of its medium-term strategic and institutional plan.

23. The role of cities relative to the climate change crisis was another important factor. Analysis by UN-Habitat showed that consumption patterns and lifestyles with regard to land-use and urban sprawl had a critical impact. Promotion of sustainable patterns of consumption and production, according to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and taking into account the economic and social needs of developing countries, was critical to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, and should be given greater priority.

24. With regard to UN-Habitat's fundraising activities, she expressed concern at the imbalance in the levels of core and non-core funding. The continued unpredictability of funding, attributable to the imbalance between earmarked and non-earmarked contributions and to the dependency on a small number of donors, lessened the ability of the Human Settlements Programme to function as Member States required, and hampered effective and efficient implementation of the Habitat Agenda in line with the national priorities of developing countries. The Group of 77 and China urged the international community to give due attention and support to achieving the goals of the Habitat Agenda, including through the provision of financial support on a predictable basis.

25. The Group welcomed the adoption of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for 2008-2013, the UN-Habitat Governing Council's approval of experimental reimbursable seeding operations to finance pro-poor housing and urban development and the series of ministerial meetings held at the regional level on housing and urban development. Those meetings should continue to focus on integrating the Habitat Agenda and related internationally agreed development goals into national plans and strategies.

26. **Mr. Muita** (Kenya) speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, observed that one of the major challenges of rapid, unplanned and unsustainable urbanization was the growth of slums and other informal settlements within and adjacent to major towns and cities. About 1.2 billion people lived in slums, a figure that was likely to rise exponentially if remedial measures were not taken. Indeed, if the

current trend continued, some of the major cities in developing countries might well be transformed into slums, which gravely undermine efforts to achieve sustainable development through implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

27. The current food, energy and financial crises would seriously affect the achievement of the Habitat Agenda goals. Together with the challenges emanating from climate change, they required new and innovative approaches to urbanization. The food and energy crises were interlinked: urbanization affected land use and water resource management, which, in turn, affected food production, while on the other hand, about 75 per cent of the world's energy was consumed in urban areas. Thus, it was not surprising that the food and energy crises were leading to widespread social unrest and political protests in almost all the regions of the world.

28. The vast majority of urban areas in African countries lacked safe housing, access to water and sanitation, modern energy supply and waste collection and disposal. Urbanization also brought a wide range of social, economic and environmental problems, including some related to consumption and production patterns. Achieving the twin goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world required urgent attention, particularly as they were closely related to such issues as poverty, employment, transportation and the provision of basic services such as water and sanitation.

29. To deal with the growing challenge of urbanization, African leaders had established the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development. At its July meeting, held in Abuja, the Conference had considered the challenges of housing and urbanization facing Africa, and had produced the Abuja resolution and the Abuja Plan of Action containing important pragmatic decisions and commitments in the areas of funding, capacity-building, monitoring and evaluation and institutional and regulatory measures that could bring real change to the state of housing and urban development in Africa. The African Group hoped for the support of all stakeholders in the implementation of those decisions.

30. The African Group commended UN-Habitat for initiating the implementation of the medium-term

strategic and institutional plan for 2008-2013. It hoped that the Plan, with its goal of putting in place by 2013 the necessary policies, strategies and conditions to stabilize the growth of slums and subsequently reduce the number of slum dwellers, would fast-track the achievement of the human settlements-related Millennium Development Goals.

31. The Group expressed satisfaction at the progress achieved thus far in the implementation of the experimental reimbursable seeding operations, and, in particular, the finalization of the Operational Procedures and Operational Manual and the establishment of the Steering and Monitoring Committee.

32. For UN-Habitat to succeed, it needed adequate financial and other resources. The African Group called on Member States in a position to do so to increase their contributions to UN-Habitat funds, activities and projects.

33. **Mr. Kabir** (Bangladesh) observed that urbanization was growing rapidly, with half the world's population now living in urban areas — a proportion that was expected to reach two thirds by the year 2030. Such an increase would cause further expansion of slums, greater lack of basic services, including water and sanitation, and changes in consumption and production patterns.

34. Developing countries and the poor would be hardest hit by the current multiple crises of rising food and fuel prices, climate change, high volatility in the commodity markets, and significant downturn in the international financial system. A concerted and integrated approach was needed to address the social, economic and environmental challenges posed by those crises.

35. Sustainable urbanization must be integrated into national development strategies and mainstreamed into United Nations operational activities, but not at the expense of rural development. Every citizen of a country deserved a secure supply of basic services and employment opportunities. Sustainable urban development should be based on environmentally sound technologies. While cities only occupied just over 2 per cent of land, they currently produced 70 per cent of waste and of greenhouse gas emissions. Environmentally sound basic urban infrastructure and services were therefore critically important to ensure environmentally friendly and pro-poor urbanization.

36. It had been estimated that for the period 2005-2020, \$20 billion a year would be required to attain the MDG 7 target relating to slum-dwellers and to prevent the future formation of slums. However, official development assistance (ODA) to the urban sector had remained largely stagnant at \$2 billion per annum in real terms for the past decade. Bangladesh called on the developed countries to increase the flow of ODA in support of pro-poor housing and urban development in developing countries. Innovative financial mechanisms could supplement domestic resources and ODA; and microcredit programmes would afford the urban poor access to credit. Special attention should be accorded to the least developed countries, as demographic growth and the physical expansion of towns and cities far outpaced their investments in housing and basic urban infrastructure and international support to them was lacking. Future UN-Habitat reports should include a section on the status of sustainable urbanization in the least developed countries, based on disaggregated data and information.

37. While UN-Habitat had made some progress in its resource mobilization efforts, its total resources were far from adequate to implement its core mandates. Minimal core resources, unpredictability of funding and dependency on a small number of donors were major threats to its effective operation.

38. **Mr. Nasir Ali Khan** (Indonesia) said that with nearly half the world's population living in urban areas, the imperative to address sustainable development in the urban context had never been greater. The Habitat Agenda's twin goals of shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world had become even more significant in the light of the current multiple crises and climate change. The pressures of rising fuel and food costs and the economic crisis on 1.2 billion urban slum-dwellers could reverse progress made thus far and pose new obstacles to further progress, which meant that greater attention should be focused on the implementation of the Habitat Agenda within the context of attaining the Millennium Development Goals.

39. In the short term, measures to alleviate the effects of rising food and energy prices, emergency shelters for communities affected by natural disasters and conflicts and capacity-building measures for the purposes of integrating reconstruction and recovery would be vital. For the medium term, Indonesia welcomed the implementation of the medium-term

strategic and institutional plan for 2008-2013 and its objective of establishing by 2013 the necessary conditions to stabilize slum growth and reduce numbers of slum-dwellers. In the long term, it would be important to address rural underdevelopment in developing countries, which had been a major cause of unprecedented urban growth.

40. Development strategies based on non-agricultural industries, together with distorting agricultural subsidies granted by developed countries, had resulted in the decline of agricultural activities and rural development in developing countries, resulting not only in unsustainable urbanization but also in food insecurity. Promoting capacity-building for sustainable livelihoods in poor rural populations was as important as it was in poor urban communities. The guidelines on decentralization adopted by the Habitat Governing Council provided a good basis for developing strong local responses and capacities. At the same time, measures to ensure access to clean water and sanitation, health and education should be taken in both urban and rural settings with a view to bringing about equitable growth and pro-poor human settlement.

41. In seeking an urbanization model that could support Indonesia's development, his Government had been applying population control, economic incentive, transmigration and social policies relating to urban and rural development. It had promoted urban-rural linkages and synergies that included greater cooperation between rural and central governments. Through intercity and interregional cooperation, it had sought to address labour supply and demand issues and the growth of suburban areas bridging urban and rural areas.

42. Central to the realization of sustainable urbanization was the international community's support. An international environment conducive to capacity-building measures and pro-poor growth must be created. While governments were chiefly responsible for taking those measures, the private sector, civil society and the United Nations were indispensable partners.

43. **Mr. Liu Yuyin** (China) said that despite tireless efforts by countries and some positive results, the question of human settlements was far from being resolved, and the situation remained grave, particularly in developing countries. Sustainable development offered the only solution. A certain rate of economic

growth was needed to solve the question of human settlements, especially in the developing countries, but that development must be pursued from a scientific perspective and in a coordinated and sustainable manner, taking into account such concerns as population growth, productivity, the rational exploitation of resources and environmental protection.

44. Improving human settlements in developing countries should become the centrepiece of improving human settlements globally. The international community, and the developed countries in particular, should demonstrate political will and good faith by fostering an external environment favourable to the economic and social development of developing countries and by honouring their commitments in the fields of finance, technology, human resources, market access and debt relief.

45. A comprehensive partnership must be established. As human settlements development covered a wide range of fields and included a multitude of elements, it required the full participation of society as a whole, including not only central governments but also local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector. His Government accorded top priority to improving the human habitat. China was upgrading its urban infrastructure, and its environmental preservation efforts in urban areas had been a remarkable success. As a result, the cities were functioning more effectively and residential construction in both urban and rural areas was proceeding at full speed. China was ready to step up exchanges and cooperation with the international community in the field of human settlements development, including through events such as the fourth session of the World City Forum to be held in November in Nanjing, under the theme "Harmonious Urbanization".

46. **Ms. Deo** (India) said that her delegation supported the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for 2008-2013, particularly the focus on strengthening the catalytic and pre-investment role of UN-Habitat. In that context, she welcomed the progress made towards the early operationalization of the experimental reimbursable seeding operations, which would enable UN-Habitat to assist national development programmes. Her Government had been actively promoting institutional housing finance to the poorer and more vulnerable sectors of society and she

therefore hoped that the experimental phase would lead to an increase in follow-up investment.

47. Her delegation supported the guidelines on decentralization approved by the Governing Council of UN-Habitat. Her country had always advocated greater involvement of local authorities in the decision-making and implementation process and had worked to make those authorities more representative and to increase the scope of their activities.

48. Her delegation was concerned that the regular budget resources of UN-Habitat remained low and therefore supported the request for them to be increased. The international community would also need to provide additional financial and technical assistance if the Millennium Development Goals related to UN-Habitat were to be achieved. Such efforts should focus on ensuring productive employment, durable economic and physical infrastructure and food security. South-South initiatives should also be supported through triangular cooperation.

49. Her delegation agreed that the urban poor were among the most exposed victims of the current food and energy crises. It also agreed that rational land use planning, green building codes and energy-efficient transport options were among the most effective measures to reduce energy consumption and emissions. In that context, she noted that her Government had adopted legislation to promote the efficient use of energy and to promote the use of compressed natural gas for public transport.

50. India's Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission provided land tenure, affordable shelter, water, sanitation, education, health care and social security services to the poor and was complemented by urban employment and urban safety programmes. An integral strategy promoting affordable rural housing included the distribution of grants-in-aid for the construction of dwelling units and upgrading of temporary housing and a poverty eradication programme focusing on the creation of jobs, economic infrastructure and community and social assets.

51. **Ms. Zemene** (Ethiopia) said that global challenges such as the food and fuel crises required a concerted and integrated approach that addressed the problem of poverty. While urbanization helped to reduce rural poverty, rural development was also of paramount importance. Enhanced productivity in the

agricultural sector would increase the income of the rural poor and accelerate the pace of sustainable urban development. Her delegation therefore supported the call for the Economic and Social Council to include an urban pillar as a cross-cutting issue. The coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda and related Millennium Development Goals was essential in order to address urban challenges in an effective manner. Her delegation also welcomed the decision of the twenty-first session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat to approve the medium-term strategy and institutional plan for 2008-2013 and urged development partners to continue their efforts to implement the Habitat Agenda.

52. The Government of Ethiopia was implementing a major low-cost housing scheme to provide decent shelter for the urban poor, particularly those living in slum areas. The scheme had become an important means of employment generation for students from technical and vocational schools. Small and microenterprises were also being promoted with a view to increasing household income.

53. It was high time for the international community to give equal treatment to all of the internationally agreed development goals, and the target set to improve the quality of life of slum-dwellers was of particular relevance to urban development in many developing countries. In that connection, special emphasis must be placed on the growing unemployment problem in urban areas. The United Nations, development partners and other stakeholders therefore needed to take effective steps to build institutional capacities and to promote urban-rural and urban-urban linkages.

54. **Mr. Emozozo** (Nigeria) said that the daunting challenges of rapid urbanization underscored the need for renewed efforts to provide shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development. The Habitat Agenda was intimately linked with sustainable development. His delegation therefore called for additional financial support for UN-Habitat to enable it to provide adequate assistance to Member States, particularly developing countries.

55. The medium-term strategy and institutional plan provided a strong framework for improved service delivery and for the transformation of UN-Habitat into a more results-oriented organization. His delegation supported the experimental reimbursable seeding operations as an innovative mechanism for financing

pro-poor housing. The successful operation of the mechanism would facilitate access to the funds required to provide affordable housing to low-income groups.

56. The achievement of sustainable urbanization and the reduction of poverty required the full cooperation of all stakeholders in the Habitat Agenda. His delegation welcomed the partnerships established with the private sector, local authorities and other United Nations agencies to enhance the capacity of UN-Habitat to assist developing countries in meeting the human settlements-related Millennium Development Goals. For its part, Nigeria was committed to the Habitat Agenda and had put in place appropriate policies designed to make significant improvements in the lives of most urban slum-dwellers by 2020.

57. **Ms. Ovcharenko** (Russian Federation) said that international cooperation on human settlements was an important component of the global agenda for sustainable development. She supported the strengthening of UN-Habitat as the key United Nations entity in that area and the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the human settlement goals formulated in the Millennium Development Declaration and in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

58. Her delegation agreed with the recommendations to improve the effectiveness of UN-Habitat activities and to strengthen cooperation between the Programme and Governments at the national level. It also supported the efforts of UN-Habitat to mitigate the social, economic and environmental consequences of the climate, food, energy and financial crises. However, such efforts should be considered in the context of the Programme's main activities, namely helping Member States provide their populations with decent housing, eradicating poverty and addressing social problems in the context of urban development.

59. The current year had marked the launch of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for 2008-2013, which would help to focus the activity of the Programme and to broaden its financial base. One important element was the development and strengthening of UN-Habitat partnerships, especially with the Governments of interested countries at the national and local levels. It was important to increase cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions and to strengthen the inter-agency coordination of UN-Habitat

with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNEP, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other organizations and institutions of the United Nations system working in related areas.

60. It was essential to enhance the quality of the management of UN-Habitat by improving monitoring and accountability, introducing mechanisms to evaluate projects implemented under the Programme and further enhancing methods for the collection and analysis of statistics on human settlements.

61. Her country and UN-Habitat had engaged in fruitful cooperation on a number of housing reform projects in the Russian Federation in the period from 1997 to 2007. The experience gained from those projects could be used to implement similar initiatives in other countries.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.



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Second Committee**Summary record of the 21st meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 29 October 2008, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Ogwu (Nigeria)
later: Mr. Hoppe (Vice-Chairperson) (Germany)

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- (d) Preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of assets of illicit origin and returning such assets, in particular to the countries of origin, consistent with the United Nations Convention against Corruption
- (e) Integration of the economies in transition into the world economy

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 51: Globalization and interdependence
(A/C.2/63/4)

- (a) **Role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence** (A/63/333; A/C.2/63/3)
- (b) **International migration and development** (A/63/265 and Corr.1)
- (c) **Culture and development**
- (d) **Preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of assets of illicit origin and returning such assets, in particular to the countries of origin, consistent with the United Nations Convention against Corruption** (A/63/86 and A/63/88; CAC/COSP/2008/15)
- (e) **Integration of the economies in transition into the world economy** (A/63/256)

1. **Mr. Vos** (Director, Development Policy and Analysis Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) said that the global financial crisis was affecting not only developed economies but also the economies in transition. Commodity prices were falling, the country risk premium on external borrowing had risen and the risk of capital reversals had grown. A recession in Europe and the United States, meanwhile, would hit such economies' export prospects hard. In addition, the crisis illustrated how vulnerable the growth paths of the economies in transition had been. With the rapidly deteriorating global outlook, such economies had increasing fiscal problems, widening current account deficits and weakening financial sectors. To reduce their economic vulnerability, the economies in transition must move away from their current reliance on primary exports and external financing and identify relevant policy options for greater economic diversification into production activities with higher value added.

2. He then introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the integration of the economies in transition into the world economy (A/63/256), paying particular attention to the policy challenges and conclusions set out in chapter V of the report. The recommendations contained in the report would need to be tailored to countries' specific contexts and needs and to build on the social consensus reached in each country in pursuance of sustained high growth rates

and higher living standards. The financial crisis had made an already significant challenge even greater. However, the manifest vulnerability of the economies in transition to the whims of world markets made it even more urgent to address economic diversification.

3. **Mr. Seth** (Director, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the impact of globalization on the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (A/63/333). The current financial turmoil provided further evidence of the extent to which the world had become interdependent and the need for greater global cooperation. The current climate was one of deep concern and pessimism. Globalization produced booms and busts, the former marked by unequal benefits, the latter by universal pain. Indeed, those who would be hit hardest by the current crisis were unlikely to have ever heard the terms "stock market" and "equity".

4. Events were unfolding so rapidly that many of the recommendations contained in the report and many of the areas of focus on which it was based had already been left behind. No matter what happened, the poor must be insured; one way to do that was to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in all countries. Concerted action within the framework of the United Nations was the only way of ensuring that all voices were heard and that globalization served the betterment of all. The case for energized multilateralism was stronger today than ever before.

5. Lastly, the Committee might wish to consider focusing on a specific aspect of the globalization discourse the following year. The Secretariat stood ready to provide such assistance as was necessary in that regard.

6. **Mr. Guest** (Assistant Director, Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on international migration and development (A/63/265 and Corr.1), paying particular attention to the responses to the set of open-ended questions sent to Member States in March 2008 (chapter III, section B, of the report) and existing cooperation mechanisms on international migration and development (chapter V of the report).

7. **Mr. Majlessi** (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on preventing and combating

corrupt practices and transfer of assets of illicit origin and returning such assets, in particular to the countries of origin, consistent with the United Nations Convention against Corruption (A/63/88).

8. Since June, when the report had been finalized, a further nine States had ratified the Convention. Today, there were 126 parties and 140 signatories to the Convention. The strong and continuing rise in ratifications pointed towards universal adherence and accentuated the Convention's role as the first and only global instrument against corruption.

9. Turning to the self-assessment checklist developed by the Secretariat pursuant to Conference of the States Parties resolution 1/2 (paragraph 6 of the report), he said that to date 73 Member States, including 66 States parties to the Convention, had submitted self-assessment reports. The information provided through the self-assessment checklist was essential to creating knowledge about the steps taken by Member States to implement the Convention. The initial overview provided at the Conference's second session had been refined on the basis of both additional self-assessment reports and supplementary information from States parties. Accurate information was essential in terms of both implementing the Convention and identifying technical assistance needs.

10. As noted in paragraph 9 of the report, the Conference of the States Parties had decided that the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Review of the Implementation of the Convention should prepare terms of reference for a review mechanism for consideration, action and possible adoption by the Conference at its third session and, to that end, had called on States parties and signatory States to submit proposals to the Working Group. Thirty-three States had submitted proposals. To facilitate discussions at the Working Group's second intersessional meeting, held in September 2008, informal consultations had been held in August 2008. The proposals had been organized under provisional headings, thereby producing a consolidated version that had served as a basis for discussions. At the second intersessional meeting itself, the Working Group had begun work on a rolling text of the draft terms of reference, using the consolidated text as a basis. In addition, it had requested the Secretariat to provide a working document using the rolling text as a basis for informal consultations. Those consultations would be held in November 2008, in preparation for

the Working Group's next intersessional meeting in December. The pilot project to test methods for reviewing implementation, meanwhile, had entered its second phase and now involved 29 countries from all regions. The Secretariat would report its findings to the Conference at its third session.

11. Asset recovery continued to enjoy high priority in the work of the Conference of the States Parties. As noted in paragraph 12 of the report, the Conference, in its resolution 2/3, had decided that the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Asset Recovery should continue its deliberations on the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of its first intersessional meeting, held in Vienna in August 2007. The Working Group, which had held its second intersessional meeting in September 2008, had thus refined its recommendations, giving high priority to knowledge availability, creation and management; welcoming the Secretariat's progress in developing a comprehensive knowledge management centre; reconfirming the recommendation on developing practical tools for asset recovery; highlighting the importance of efforts to establish a network of contact points for asset recovery for building trust and confidence between requesting and requested States; and stressing the high demand for technical assistance in implementing chapter V of the Convention.

12. He also referred to the self-assessment responses concerning chapter V of the Convention (paragraph 22 of the report), the percentage of States reporting partial compliance or full non-compliance with chapter V that had requested technical assistance (paragraph 26 of the report) and the Stolen Asset Recovery initiative (chapter IV, section B, of the report).

13. Lastly, the undiminished commitment of Member States, timely preparation and constructive dialogue in the Working Groups would all be essential to meeting the challenges and expectations of the third session of the Conference of the States Parties, to be held in Doha in November 2009. The General Assembly could offer invaluable support in that regard by encouraging Member States that had not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention and make every effort to implement its provisions and by calling on all States to engage in substantive and constructive dialogue during the preparations for the Conference and work towards consensus-based decisions in the Working Groups. The Assembly might also wish to take account of the fact that, as the number of States parties and the dynamism

of international cooperation for implementation of the Convention rose, expectations of UNODC would also increase exponentially and that, when States parties reached agreement on the terms of reference of the review mechanism, the Secretariat would be expected to perform a high volume of new and complex tasks. The accomplishment of such tasks would be feasible only if Member States provided UNODC with strong support geared towards ensuring that appropriate resources were in place to make the Convention's provisions operational and fully effective.

14. **Mr. González Segura** (Mexico) asked, in light of the fact that the report of the Secretary-General on international migration and development (A/63/265) had been written several months previously, whether any consideration had yet been given to the possible consequences of the global financial crisis on migration issues.

15. *Mr. Hoppe (Germany), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

16. **Mr. Guest** (Assistant Director, Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) said that as yet there was only preliminary evidence of the effect of the economic downturn on migratory flows. There was some indication of a reduction in remittances and there were expected to be implications for employment, but there were not yet any definitive data in that regard.

17. **Mr. Hunte** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that it was crucial for the United Nations to drive the international policy debate on globalization. United Nations bodies should be ready to respond to the increased challenges but not lose sight of the opportunities of globalization.

18. The globalization of markets meant that economic meltdowns caused by policy failures in a few developed countries, where decision makers ignored the interests of the vast majority of countries, quickly spread to other markets. Global governance and sound regulatory frameworks were therefore important. The Group of 77 would continue to strive for equitable sharing of the benefits of globalization through strengthened international cooperation.

19. Development issues should be central to the management of globalization to ensure that everybody benefited. Developing countries persistently highlighted the need for policy space and flexibility to

respond to the spread of economic crises. Global economic growth was essential to provide the resources necessary to achieve both national and internationally agreed development goals. However, the necessary growth could not be based on unsustainable and unequal non-participatory financial systems.

20. The present economic situation threatened to further widen the gap between developed and developing countries, which was a major obstacle to sustainable development and a cause of concern to the Group of 77 and China. Developing countries were unable to shield their economies and faced daunting challenges, but the onus was on the developed countries, the originators of the crisis, to take corrective action to prevent a deepening global recession.

21. Increasing globalization gave greater importance to the global partnership for development. Lack of progress impeded economic growth and social development and thus the realization of the internationally agreed development goals. Development partners were not living up to their long-standing commitments under Goal 8 of the MDGs.

22. In responding to the challenges of globalization, the international community should be particularly mindful of the special circumstances of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, and be responsive to their national development plans and strategies. Governance reform of international financial and development institutions was urgently needed, particularly in the Bretton Woods institutions, to improve representation of developing countries in decision-making. Lack of such reform undermined the legitimacy of those institutions and perpetuated structural imbalances.

23. The report of the Secretary-General on international migration and development (A/63/265) provided useful information about the ongoing efforts by Governments to include development in regional and interregional mechanisms focusing on international migration, which both affected and was affected by the development process. The effects of international migration on economic and social development highlighted the complex relationship between underdevelopment, poverty, social exclusion and migration. The Group emphasized the very important

contribution made by migrants to the development of destination countries.

24. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of assets of illicit origin and returning such assets, in particular to the countries of origin, consistent with the United Nations Convention against Corruption (A/63/88), the Group welcomed the outcomes of the first two sessions of the Conference of the States Parties and encouraged parties to implement the initiatives on asset recovery and the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building, particularly in developing countries. Developed countries should cooperate further in addressing the repatriation of money illegally acquired from developing countries to their respective countries of origin. He looked forward to the working groups reaching agreement on the terms of reference of the mechanism to review the implementation of the Convention.

25. In conclusion, both the long-standing and the new challenges of globalization needed to be addressed in a coherent and coordinated manner, in order to achieve sustainable development.

26. **Mr. Delacroix** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro; and, in addition, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the economic crisis, which could hinder the achievement of the MDGs had also highlighted the interdependence of the world economic system and the need for communal efforts to manage globalization in a sustainable way and deal with the new challenges facing the international community.

27. The European Union welcomed the establishment of the Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis. Since the financial crisis might worsen the food crisis, a global partnership on food security should be set up. The European Union was committed to providing support for developing countries in a variety of ways and to playing its part in the implementation of the declaration adopted at the High-Level Conference on World Food Security in June. It had redeployed some of its programmes and was planning to create an ad hoc instrument for rapid response to soaring food prices in developing countries, with a value of up to €1 billion. It was crucial for countries to adopt national policies to

encourage the development of agricultural sectors and small local producers.

28. Policies for employment and decent work should also be strengthened, in particular by improving production capacities and creating conditions favourable to economic growth that would create jobs, especially for women. Developing social protection measures required more concerted action by States, and education needed to be improved to provide a better quality, competitive workforce. Universal access to primary education, particularly for girls, was central to policies to combat inequality, and contributed to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals.

29. While the rapid expansion of global trade in natural resources and the increase in global consumption had encouraged growth, they had also caused progressive harm to the environment. Regulations and policies should be put in place to ensure the rational use of natural resources and to guarantee sustainable practices.

30. The European Consensus on Development, adopted in 2005, highlighted the importance of policy coherence among European Union member countries. Greater coherence would contribute to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals.

31. Though there had been strong growth in the economies in transition, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General on integration of the economies in transition into the world economy (A/63/256), they remained vulnerable owing to their limited diversification of domestic production sectors and high dependence on a few export commodities of low value added content, and would therefore be affected by the global economic slowdown. Those countries should be helped to develop their industrial structures and broaden production. Their integration also depended on foreign direct investment, which should be bolstered, in spite of the financial crisis, so as to accelerate the modernization of technologies. Those countries should make efforts to encourage a stable economic environment in order to facilitate such investment. A better qualified workforce was also crucial, so the European Union encouraged countries in transition to increase spending on higher education, vocational training and continuous skills upgrading. The European Union supported economies in transition through the stabilization and association process and the European

Neighbourhood Policy. It welcomed the discussions held during the inter-ministerial conferences of middle-income countries, particularly the one held in Namibia in August, which had emphasized the importance of taking account of the specific needs of those countries, in particular by supporting their infrastructure.

32. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General on preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of assets of illicit origin, consistent with the United Nations Convention against Corruption (A/63/88), that Convention was the first legally binding instrument on the subject. Its wide ratification and the work of the second session of the Conference of the States Parties illustrated the international community's determination to combat that scourge. The third session of the Conference of the States Parties should adopt a strong and effective review mechanism. The European Union also hoped that a mechanism to facilitate the recovery of assets could rapidly come into force.

33. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General on international migration and development (A/63/265), the link between international migration and development was presently undisputed. Migration presented opportunities for economic growth for everybody; the World Bank estimated that in 2025 migrants would contribute around US\$ 772 billion to the growth of world income. Dialogue between countries of origin and countries of destination was imperative to ensure that both could benefit from the positive effects of international migration. He commended the Government of Belgium for having organized the first meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development in 2007, and thanked the Government of the Philippines for its forthcoming hosting of the second meeting. The European Union strongly supported the Forum, as it gave countries the opportunity for dialogue on the issue, and welcomed the cooperation between the Forum and the United Nations.

34. By adopting the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum, European Heads of State had given new impetus to a balanced and concerted migration policy. Mindful of the positive effects of migration for global development, the Pact aimed to allow managed immigration, of benefit to both the country of origin and the country of destination as well as to the migrants themselves. It would promote legal migration, taking into account the needs, priorities and capacities

of each member country, and work to combat illegal immigration, while respecting the fundamental rights and dignity of migrants. Above all, the Pact aimed to develop a close partnership with countries of origin, promoting synergies between migration and development. An example of that partnership in action was the second Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development, to be held in Paris in November, following up the work of the first Conference, held in Rabat in 2006.

35. Culture and development were inextricably linked: cultural diversity was a driving force for development and a means of achieving a more fulfilling existence. Culture and development also made a crucial contribution to efforts to promote human rights, democracy and peace, all factors essential to achieving the MDGs by 2015. Over the course of the previous decade, UNESCO had developed a holistic approach to demonstrate the key role of culture in socio-economic development, based on a number of international legal principles. The UNDP-Spain MDG Achievement Fund, launched in 2007, contained a section on culture and development managed by UNESCO. The European Union fully supported that initiative, which addressed culture as a pillar of development and a factor of social cohesion and peace.

36. Despite the difficulties involved at a time of severe economic upheavals, achieving the MDGs was vital to ensure that globalization was beneficial to all countries and peoples, so the European Union remained determined to continue its efforts in that regard.

37. **Mrs. Wahab** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the concept of globalization and interdependence was under intense scrutiny at a time when all Member States were under serious threat on several fronts. The Secretary-General's report on the impact of globalization on the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (A/63/333), referred to several forces powering globalization, all of which had global economic, social and environmental impacts. The massive two-way financial flows and the mushrooming of cross-border mergers and acquisitions had had far-reaching implications for the real economy, with a dramatic increase in the value of foreign exchange transactions. Economic growth had helped

more countries to gain access to better health and education, and the role of women in development had been enhanced.

38. There were, however, grave problems to be faced, and the mechanisms and institutions put in place had not enhanced the coherence, complementarity and coordination of global economic policymaking. The financial crisis that had engulfed the world was uppermost in most people's minds as economies slowed down and stock markets became more volatile. The international trading system was also under stress, with the failure of the Doha Round, and the global issue of migration also required attention.

39. The fundamentals of the ASEAN member countries' economies remained strong, but the effects of globalization meant that everybody would be adversely affected by the crisis. The asymmetry of the globalized world added to the trouble, with capital, technologies and skills remaining concentrated in advanced industrial countries.

40. The outlook for 2008 had seemed promising for ASEAN. However, as a result of the global financial difficulties in the second half of 2007, the financial intermediation and services sector, which had recorded the second highest growth rate in 2006, had registered a significant decline in investment.

41. ASEAN member countries were determined to face the financial crisis together and would continue to work towards establishing an ASEAN Economic Community by 2015. ASEAN, together with China, Japan and the Republic of Korea had agreed to enable access to an emergency fund in order to defend the region against the current financial crisis. The ASEAN group of countries embraced the concept of trying to reap the benefits of globalization while avoiding its downsides and it was moving towards much closer political and social integration. The recently concluded ASEAN Charter was proof of the group's recognition that there was strength in coordination, cooperation and cohesion in the face of the multidimensional impact of globalization. As one of the oldest regional groupings, ASEAN agreed with the assertion in the report that multilateral solutions, based on a full participation and open dialogue across the international community, remained the best hope for providing a secure economic future for all.

42. **Mr. Muita** (Kenya), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that, in an increasingly

globalized world in which the economic benefits were unevenly distributed, African countries were allowed little flexibility in pursuing their national development policies. Africa's contribution to global decision-making and standard-setting was minimal. Nevertheless, crises that originated outside Africa took their harshest toll on the continent and threatened to marginalize it even further.

43. While Africa acknowledged primary responsibility for its own development, global programmes and policies should support its regional and national efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, and to facilitate an equitable sharing of the benefits of globalization. The Group called for the strengthening of international development cooperation with African countries and the enhancement of the global partnership for development.

44. Like globalization, international migration produced both benefits and challenges for receiving and transit countries, as well as the countries of origin of migrants. Regrettably, there was a perception in the industrialized world that migrants benefited solely their countries of origin. Respect for the human rights of migrants and their dependants was of paramount importance. The African Group supported the ongoing exchange of views at the Global Forum on Migration and Development and trusted that migration and development would once again be a major focus at the United Nations.

45. Africa had many times been the victim of corrupt practices, in which public assets were transferred to banks abroad and subsequently transformed into private possessions. African countries' requests for those assets to be returned to their rightful owners had not always been given due consideration. He therefore welcomed the accession to or ratification of the United Nations Convention against Corruption by a large number of Member States and urged those that had not yet done so to ratify the Convention as quickly as possible.

46. In addition to the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Corruption, adopted by the African Union, a number of regional economic communities had put in place anti-corruption instruments, thus demonstrating Africa's resolve to combat corruption. Regional and subregional efforts could bear fruit, however, only if they received global support. Finally,

all countries should condemn corruption wherever it occurred; there could be no safe havens for those practising corruption.

47. **Mr. Gonsalves** (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the benefits and continued credibility of globalization to CARICOM and the developing world depended not on broad statistics suggesting global economic growth, but on tangible improvements in the quality of life and choices available to people. Without a development-centred *raison d'être*, the CARICOM countries would have difficulty distinguishing between globalization and previous economic offerings by developed countries, which had been clearly exploitative.

48. Globalization and interdependence had generated a number of significant external development challenges for CARICOM that were neither of its making nor within its ability to correct. The rule-based systems that underpinned globalization had made insufficient allowances for the economies of small island developing States and had uprooted their traditional agricultural livelihoods. While those States continued to meet and exceed standards on good governance, open borders and economic liberalization, developed nations repeatedly skirted their trade obligations and reneged on their developmental pledges, to the detriment of small island developing States' collective advancement.

49. The existing rules of the global financial order had placed a glass ceiling on economic growth and developmental progress for CARICOM States. It was as yet unclear whether globalization was a compelling option for such States which, despite misleading per capita averages, retained deep pockets of severe poverty and highly vulnerable economies. Furthermore, although the CARICOM Governments had played no role in the current financial crisis, it would have severe impacts on the region. CARICOM urged donor countries to resist the temptation to curtail official development assistance (ODA) in response to the crisis.

50. It was clear from the Secretary-General's report that the promised benefits of globalization had been neither universally achieved nor uniformly distributed. In many cases, the statistical improvements had been negligible, when weighed against the social upheaval caused by pro-globalization policies. The challenge

facing the United Nations was to reconfigure the architecture of globalization to be more people-centred and less preoccupied with globalization for the sake of globalization.

51. CARICOM recognized the important link between migration and other global issues and the fact that all such issues must be considered together for a clear understanding of the challenges involved. Globalization had spawned a creeping cultural homogeneity with a distinct western and mass consumption bias. Indigenous cultures the world over were at risk of being supplanted by a shallow consumer ethic driven by multinational corporations whose sole interest was to create a standardized population of global purchasers. A fundamental cultural bigotry lay just beneath the surface of countless global conflicts. CARICOM stood willing to join all Member States in combating destructive intolerance.

52. While cultures could and should remain diverse, some basic human rights were universal. Chief among them was the sovereign right to peaceful self-determination. There was no one-size-fits-all solution and the right of States to fashion their own solutions could not be impugned. An understanding of and respect for culture and diversity was key to development in a globalized world.

53. **Mr. González Segura** (Mexico), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that, while migration generated benefits for both receiving countries and countries of origin, it also presented a number of challenges. Dialogue and cooperation among all stakeholders was indispensable to ensure the full realization of the benefits of migration through an integral approach. Such an approach should remain people-centred and seek to ensure the rights and dignity of migrants.

54. He welcomed the organization of the Global Forum on Migration and Development as an ideal stage for the discussion of all topics related to international migration and development. The Rio Group was convinced that the Forum derived its legitimacy from its relationship with the United Nations and that it was necessary to maintain a lively exchange of ideas between the Forum and the Organization. He especially welcomed the inclusion of migrants' human rights as a topic at the second session of the Forum, and trusted that it would be included in subsequent sessions as well.

55. He noted with interest the international migration and development activities of the United Nations system and other relevant organizations, as referred to in the Secretary-General's report (A/63/265), and said they were additional proof of the issue's importance and of its close ties to the Organization's mandate. The establishment of an interface should be explored, as there was as yet no forum in which such organizations could share their experiences with Member States.

56. The Committee should remain seized of the topic of migration as part of the follow-up process to the High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development. In addition, the work of the Global Forum on Migration and Development should be considered as a technical platform, governed by the statutes agreed on by the participants, but with a defined link to the Organization. Finally, high-level dialogues on international migration should continue to be held periodically within the framework of the General Assembly, allowing for an in-depth, balanced discussion of the issue. The Rio Group strongly supported the proposal put forward by the President of Guatemala regarding the holding of panel discussions in 2009.

57. **Mr. Sobhan** (Bangladesh) said that it was in the collective interest of Member States to develop a mechanism that maximized the positive impacts of migration and minimized its negative consequences. Bangladesh could hardly over-emphasize the role of migration and remittances in its economic development. Nevertheless, despite full liberalization of goods and capital markets, the integration of labour markets still faced insurmountable challenges. While foreign capital received preferential treatment, foreign labour often faced negative discrimination; such a double standard was unacceptable. He urged the international community to take expeditious measures for the liberalization of markets in order to facilitate the movement of service providers under mode 4 of the General Agreement on Trade in Services.

58. Migrant workers bore the costs of their migration. In recent years, the benefits of migration had become less attractive owing to higher migration costs and low wages and hazardous conditions abroad. Efforts were needed to ensure fair treatment, decent work and legal recognition of migrant status. Mutually agreed minimum living wages for migrant workers must be set and the integration process of migrants must be simplified.

59. Governments should work with the private sector to facilitate remittance flows, an initiative which had potentially high pay-offs. Host countries must ensure the unhindered transfer of funds to countries of origin with minimal transaction costs. Sending countries should also help migrants use remittances properly and invest back home in productive sectors.

60. Governments must intensify cooperation across borders to insulate migrant workers from the impacts of current crises and countries affected by the global financial crisis should remain open to migrant workers, who could help boost ailing economies. An appropriate follow-up mechanism for the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development was needed within the United Nations system.

61. Turning to agenda item 51 (d), he said that, while corruption adversely affected society as a whole, it disproportionately impacted on the poor and vulnerable. The transfer of illicitly acquired assets abroad had consequences on economic growth, sustainable development and poverty eradication; return of such assets to their country of origin was therefore critically important.

62. As for many developing countries, addressing corruption remained a major challenge for Bangladesh. Nonetheless, the current Government had made the anti-corruption campaign one of its foremost priorities. Further capacity-building of relevant institutions remained essential for the success of the campaign. The Government of Bangladesh had taken measures to bring back illegally transferred money. Despite its sincere efforts, it had not achieved the desired goal, owing to complex procedures and lack of legal expertise. Increased international cooperation, especially mutual legal assistance, was of the utmost importance in that regard.

63. He welcomed the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative jointly launched by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Bank and hoped its implementation would yield concrete results. Asset recovery, a new area of international cooperation, would help countries remedy the worst effects of corruption and would send a strong message that there was no safe haven for the proceeds of corruption.

64. **Mr. Liu Zhenmin** (China) said that to ensure that globalization benefited people of all countries and contributed to the achievement of international agreed development goals such as the MDGs, top priority

should be given to preventing the spread of the financial crisis. All concerned must strengthen cooperation and take resolute, responsible and timely measures to stabilize the market, rebuild confidence, curb protectionist tendencies and maintain a normal trade order. That would help restore market vitality and prevent recession. It was also necessary to engage in profound reform to strengthen global economic governance in order to make the international financial regime more adaptable to circumstances and ensure that the relevant rules were fair and effective so as to avoid crises in the future.

65. Since developing countries and poor populations had been hit hardest by the food and energy crises, climate change and the financial downturn, it was vital that the international community fulfilled its assistance commitments. Developed countries should redouble their efforts to help least developed countries and regions, particularly in solving the problems of hunger, medical care and children's education. They should reduce or cancel the debts owed by least developed countries and provide tariff-free treatment to their goods. The problems of inadequate regulation and lax oversight, exposed by the financial crisis, warranted attention, and it was also necessary to address the marginalization of many developing countries and the fact that the rules of competition were neither balanced nor fair. Developing countries must engage fully in international economic policymaking on an equal footing.

66. As regards migration, uneven economic development and disparities were the main reasons behind the problems associated with migration, including illegal immigration, human trafficking and transnational organized crime. Some countries were erecting artificial obstacles to the normal movement of people across borders. To adequately resolve the immigration issue, it was necessary to promote the orderly development of the activities of legal immigrants, while also endeavouring to bridge the wealth gap that existed in the world, and thus remove the root causes of illegal migration. Developed countries and international organizations should provide more assistance to developing countries in terms of capital, trade, technology and human resources to help them achieve sustainable development and improve their capacity for immigration management.

67. Regarding corrupt practices and transfer of illicit assets, mutual support and coordination were needed at the political and technical levels among the countries concerned to block asset transfers across borders and prevent criminals from abusing the judicial procedures of their countries of residence in order to avoid being extradited or repatriated. It was also necessary to explore ways to remove the obstacles caused by the different laws of the requesting and requested States and to reduce instances where assets could not be recovered. To effectively curb corruption, international cooperation was needed in extradition, judicial assistance and asset recovery.

68. **Ms. Osman** (Sudan) said that she hoped that the upcoming second Global Forum on Migration and Development would build on the previous Forum held in 2007 and on the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development held in 2006. Migration not only had economic implications, but also played a role in bringing peoples and civilizations together. Her country's history had been enriched by migrants, whether they had merely passed through on religious pilgrimages or had settled there to become part of the social fabric.

69. The international community needed to address the concerns of migrants, countries of origin, and countries of destination alike. The United Nations and international partners had an important role to play in addressing such factors as poverty, indebtedness, natural disasters and post-conflict disruptions. She noted with concern the increase in xenophobia and the targeting of religious groups on various pretexts, and urged increased efforts to reduce obstacles to movement and social integration. Remittances from migrants abroad had been a major source of hard currency for her country, and her Government had established agencies to address the issues of migrants abroad and their families at home. Her country had recently witnessed a decrease in emigration accompanied by an increase in reverse migration by its own citizens, and was also becoming a destination country for migrants from the South. Her delegation hoped for international assistance in capacity-building to handle that influx.

70. **Mr. Natchiappan** (India) welcomed the recognition in the Secretary-General's report on the impact of globalization (A/63/333) that realization of the MDGs was dependent on the concerted management of the globalization process by the

international community and the strengthening of the global partnership for development. Insufficient attention had been paid to providing protection against the adverse impacts of the enhanced flows of capital, goods and services, technology and people, which globalization only exacerbated, leaving developing countries particularly vulnerable and hindering their development efforts. He stressed the vital need to enhance the policy space for developing countries through flexibilities in international regimes, so that they might choose the right policy tools in the context of their specific development challenges.

71. It was also essential to allow developing countries to pursue counter-cyclical macroeconomic policies and develop strategies to promote inclusive growth and full employment, so as to ensure that economic growth could provide benefits to all. Unfavourable international regimes had prevented developing countries from taking full advantage of globalization in the area of agricultural production, owing to the massive subsidies in developed countries, while the steady reduction in their industrial tariffs had greatly enhanced the risks of the de-industrialization of developing countries. Developing countries also faced unfavourable market access regimes and non-trade barriers. Furthermore, critical technologies in the areas of public health and climate change remained inaccessible and unaffordable for developing countries owing to the intellectual property rights regime.

72. In order for the benefits of globalization to be shared more evenly, a comprehensive restructuring of the international decision-making and norm-setting structures in a time-bound manner was necessary, giving greater participation to developing countries. That process should be overseen by the United Nations.

73. He welcomed the setting up of the Global Forum on Migration and Development and urged developed countries to be more receptive to requests from developing countries for increased access to their markets under mode 4 of the General Agreement on Trade in Services. Irregular migration, as well as trafficking of people, was an issue with serious security implications and requiring concerted global action.

74. **Ms. Ovcharenko** (Russian Federation) said that the discussion of migration in the General Assembly demonstrated the growing understanding of the complex and multifaceted nature of the phenomenon

and its connection with social and economic development, population issues and human rights. In addition to United Nations activities encouraging dialogue among interested States in order to enhance the benefits of migration and minimize its adverse consequences, mention should also be made of the valuable statistical data on migration produced by the Organization.

75. The first Global Forum on Migration and Development had provided a solid basis for the exchange of opinions and helped to develop partnerships to address migration issues. The second Forum, in Manila, would be an important step towards developing an international dialogue on migration and development. Regional processes and bilateral cooperation were the most effective formats for international interaction on migration and development. In that regard, the Russian Federation was working with the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States and other regional players such as the Council of Europe and the Eurasian Economic Community.

76. The Russian Federation attached special significance to strengthening cooperation in implementing the United Nations Convention against Corruption, drawing attention in particular to the outcome documents of the second session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, which were geared towards establishing effective mechanisms for monitoring of implementation, as well as enhanced provision of technical assistance. A decree of the President of the Russian Federation of 19 May 2008 had created a Council to tackle corruption, reporting to the President. The Russian Federation would be bringing its national legislation into line with the Convention against Corruption.

77. **Mr. Benmellouk** (Morocco) said that Morocco had a long history of immigration owing to its proximity to Europe and its historical, cultural and religious affiliations with the African continent and the country's dynamic economy. It had now also become a transit country as well as a host country, particularly for immigrants from sub-Saharan countries. In order to tackle the challenges of migration and take advantage of its opportunities, it was Morocco's policy to reinforce dialogue and cooperation among countries at all levels and manage migration in its global dimension. It was also necessary to invest in human development and in sectors which generated growth

and created jobs, and to set up North-South and South-South partnerships in order to develop policies to tackle criminal networks of migrant trafficking and transnational crime. Morocco's integrated management of migration had helped to significantly reduce illegal immigration from Morocco to Europe and had dismantled a number of migrant trafficking networks. Morocco attached great importance to regional cooperation in addressing the issue of migration. It favoured a balanced approach which took the interests of all other countries and of the migrants themselves into account, as illustrated by its hosting of the Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development in 2006.

78. Morocco supported the Secretary-General's recommendations concerning follow-up to the 2006 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development and the holding of a regular high-level dialogue on migration and development.

79. **Mr. Mat Isa** (Malaysia) said that the world had yet to find a humane form of globalization which placed development at its heart. Indeed, without a radical change in assumptions, the overall global power architecture and governance structures, globalization would continue to lead to greater income inequalities among and within regions and countries, to more volatile boom-bust cycles, with the rich benefiting disproportionately during good times and the poor suffering during bad times. Furthermore, it would continue to create a globalized elite who had more in common among themselves than with the poor in their own countries, a phenomenon which would significantly damage nation-building in developing countries.

80. The situation must be addressed effectively by ceasing to view globalization purely as an economic phenomenon and regulation as intrinsically bad, and markets as being separate from the society in which they functioned. It was also necessary to establish an objective test for an inclusive form of globalization that benefited the maximum number of people, rather than merely enlarging the area and potential for those with more to make even more.

81. The basic economic logic whereby pro-cyclical policies in economic downturns must be avoided should be extended to the present global economic situation: the developed world must avoid adopting isolationist and protectionist policies. Instead, it must

increase ODA and take measures to rapidly integrate the entire developing world into the global economic mainstream, thus enabling the entire developing world, and not just emerging economies, to become engines of global economic growth.

82. Turning to the issue of migration, he said that migrant workers formed a significant share of Malaysia's workforce, and there was consensus in the Malaysian Government and among employers, unions and non-governmental organizations on the need to reduce dependence on foreign workers, to improve the management of such workers and to have clear and more stringent procedures on their entry. The Government had taken various measures to that end, including the promotion of greater participation by women, mechanization and automation.

83. The human rights of migrant workers needed to be promoted and protected in a balanced manner at all stages of the migration chain. In that respect, sending countries needed to ensure that their citizens were guaranteed their right to work. It was also vital that clear contracts should be established prior to workers' departure from sending countries, and that third parties engaged in the labour movement should be held accountable for any breaches. Malaysia fully supported the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.





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Chairperson: Mr. Hoppe (Vice-Chairperson) (Germany)

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In the absence of Ms. Ogwu (Nigeria), Mr. Hoppe (Germany), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 51: Globalization and interdependence
(continued) (A/C.2/63/4)

- (a) **Role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence** (continued) (A/63/333 and A/C.2/63/3)
- (b) **International migration and development** (continued) (A/63/265 and A/63/265/Corr.1)
- (c) **Culture and development** (continued)
- (d) **Preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of assets of illicit origin and returning such assets, in particular to the countries of origin, consistent with the United Nations Convention against Corruption** (continued) (A/63/86, A/63/88 and CAC/COSP/2008/15)
- (e) **Integration of the economies in transition into the world economy** (continued) (A/63/256)

1. **Ms. Blum** (Colombia) said that her country was developing a comprehensive migration policy that identified migrants as particularly vulnerable individuals requiring State protection in their countries of origin, transit and destination and promoted the adoption of agreements to improve the security and living conditions of Colombian migrants. Domestic legislation in Colombia also guaranteed all the rights established in the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, which the country had ratified in 2005.

2. Given the political, social and cultural consequences of migration, the international policies addressing it must be based on more than merely economic criteria. Since the protection of migrants and the benefits of migration for development were inseparable, the international community should focus on ensuring the quality and safety of the migration experience and improving its impact on development, in full compliance with international law and human rights standards. Some destination countries did not fully value the contribution of migrants to their development and that lack of recognition perpetuated

the phenomenon of irregular, undocumented migration, which led to greater vulnerability for migrants.

3. Remittance flows, which were equivalent to more than double the total amount of development aid, should be treated like any other source of private income and not as a substitute for official development assistance (ODA), since they came directly from the work of migrants. Reducing transaction costs would also produce significant benefits for migrants and their families, as well as having a positive impact on development.

4. The High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development was the appropriate forum to promote coherent and comprehensive debate on all aspects of international migration and the associated opportunities and challenges for the international community. Regular follow-up by the General Assembly was required; the United Nations should also interact directly with the Global Forum on Migration and Development to ensure that its outcomes led to concrete decisions and actions by Member States.

5. **Mr. Dall'Oglio** (Observer for the International Organization for Migration (IOM)) emphasized the groundbreaking relevance of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, noting the spirit of positive debate that had prevailed. IOM also welcomed, and had contributed to, the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which offered another means of building on the outcomes of the High-level Dialogue by identifying practical and action-oriented ways to address the links between migration and development and providing an additional global platform for sustained dialogue on international cooperation in that area.

6. The nexus between migration and development was critical: while migration could result from a lack of development, it could also either alleviate or exacerbate underdevelopment. IOM encouraged the international community to make migration issues a more regular component of strategic development frameworks, crafting policies that would boost the positive potential of migration for development while reducing its negative repercussions. The approach should also take into account linkages with other critical policy areas, such as health, which were often overlooked in the migration and development debate.

7. Furthermore, it was important to build the capacity of Governments, in areas such as

policymaking and the development of fair and properly functioning legal and administrative structures, so that they could better harness the potential development benefits of migration. Such capacity-building was also vital to ensure good governance of migration, which should be made a priority at national and international levels. Lastly, partnerships were paramount; in particular, the regional consultative processes mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General (A/63/265) were important mechanisms for achieving multilateral understanding and action on migration issues.

8. **Mr. Guillén** (Peru) said that migrants in an irregular situation were particularly vulnerable, since the threat of detention and deportation prevented them from joining trade unions and placed them at risk of dangerous working conditions. While the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families had come into effect in 2003, it only covered the migrants' countries of origin; it was therefore urgent for the United Nations to engage in a broad and open debate on the whole issue of migration. His country was fostering that debate, with a view to establishing mechanisms for the exchange of information and expertise and forging closer cooperation between the United Nations and the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

9. In order to manage international migration in a responsible and constructive way, it was important to make practical use of the international instruments for migrant protection. The United Nations and its Member States should redouble their efforts to ensure respect for the human rights of migrants, migrant workers and their families. His delegation also stressed the principle of shared responsibility, as set out in the Lima Declaration adopted at the fifth Latin America and Caribbean-European Union Summit in May 2008, when the two regions had undertaken to develop an integrated approach to international migration that would be of mutual benefit to both the countries of origin and those of destination.

10. With regard to follow-up to the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, his delegation agreed with the suggestions in paragraph 71 of the Secretary-General's report (A/63/265). Concerning the recommendation for new initiatives to be implemented through existing multilateral structures, such structures could include the

international financial institutions provided that their aim was to support the needs of migrants in their individual capacity. Migrants' remittances were private funds and should not in any way be equated to ODA or other similar flows.

11. **Mr. Davide** (Philippines) said that the issue of migration was particularly important to his country, since an estimated 10 per cent of the Philippine population lived abroad as migrant workers or expatriates. The Philippines was among the top ten countries for annual average net migration, according to figures from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs; according to World Bank figures, it was also one of the top ten countries in terms of remittance flows received. For that reason, the protection of Philippine nationals abroad was one of the pillars of his country's foreign policy, while the interests of its citizens in foreign lands and at sea were also addressed by its domestic policy, laws and institutions. His country had established a number of specialized agencies to oversee migrants' needs throughout the migration process from pre-departure to return. It should also be noted that Philippine migrant workers made a substantial contribution to the economy and development of their host countries.

12. He hoped that the outcomes of the second Global Forum on Migration and Development, which his country was hosting in Manila, would be reflected in the resolution before the Committee. In that connection, his delegation strongly supported the call for a further High-level Dialogue to be held in 2011 as follow-up to the 2006 Dialogue.

13. **Ms. Santizo-Sandoval** (Guatemala) said that international migration and its contribution to development could not remain a taboo subject. International migration was not a crime but a difficult personal decision taken by human beings seeking a better life. Since in many cases they also wished to maintain a close link with their country of origin and improve the lives of their families, they contributed to both that country and the country of destination, deserving recognition and support.

14. The General Assembly should not try to simplify or ignore international migration when considering the issue of globalization. The links between migration and development were increasingly complex; countries were at the same time places of origin, transit and destination for migrant workers, while some migrants

were highly qualified and others were less well educated. It was increasingly clear that migration could make a positive contribution to sustainable development, provided it was supported by the right policies. Although it posed major challenges in areas such as security, the economy and regulation, those challenges represented an opportunity for cooperation and dialogue. International migration was also a multidimensional issue that involved human rights and the dignity of migrant populations. Transfers of migrants' remittances, which were private funds and must not be seen as development assistance, should be made easier and cheaper.

15. Her delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (A/63/265), particularly its emphasis on the achievements of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. She also reiterated her country's proposal to hold panel discussions, with the participation of former Heads of State and Government from origin, transit and destination countries, in 2009. Since no forum that claimed to discuss development could ignore or oppose the phenomenon of international migration, it was important for the United Nations to keep itself fully informed of the issue.

16. **Ms. Bensmail** (Algeria) said that her country, a key actor in the fight against illegal immigration owing to its condition as a country of transit and destination for illegal migrants, proposed a global approach to the problem, prioritizing prevention, control, cooperation and partnership. Through its active participation in subregional, regional and international meetings, it had contributed to the establishment of the African Common Position on migration and development and, in April 2006, had hosted the Meeting on Migration and Development in Algiers at which that Common Position had been adopted.

17. Her country supported the efforts of the United Nations to establish a follow-up mechanism to the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. Welcoming the meetings of the Global Forum on Migration and Development held in Brussels and Manila, it considered that stronger links between the Forum and the United Nations could help to foster dialogue and exchange of experience among practitioners and guide international cooperation. The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, which stressed the link between migration

and respect for human rights, should also be reinforced by universal ratification.

18. Her country favoured close and constructive international cooperation to combat illegal migration and, in particular, human trafficking. It had an effective legal mechanism to combat illegal immigration, transnational organized crime and terrorism. The increasing flows of illegal migrants could not however be stemmed merely by adopting more stringent laws, concluding bilateral readmission agreements, adopting more repressive regional and international conventions or mobilizing sophisticated border control techniques. The real solution was to promote development and reduce the economic disparities between developed countries and developing countries, particularly in Africa, so that emigration became a choice rather than the result of difficult economic and social conditions.

19. By establishing a direct link between migration and development in its African Common Position on migration, Africa had identified both the objective cause of migratory movements and the way to solve the problems they posed. In that area, Africans and Europeans could work together to help eradicate the main sources of such migratory flows. Africa had made development its priority, as expressed in the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which was supported by all African countries and their development partners.

20. **Ms. Espinosa** (Ecuador) said that it was imperative for the issue of migration to be addressed at multilateral forums where countries of origin, destination and transit could take decisive action. Her delegation supported the holding of the second Global Forum on Migration and Development in Manila, particularly the inclusion of the human rights of migrants as one of its fundamental issues. In view of the humanitarian, social and economic implications of migration, the General Assembly should hold biennial high-level dialogues on international migration, with the human rights of migrants as a cross-cutting issue.

21. The linkages between migration and development and the benefits and opportunities for countries of origin, transit and destination were undeniable. Migrants should therefore be seen as key actors for the economies of those countries. Remittances from migrants had a positive impact on the lives of their families and on the economy in general. However,

those private financial flows were no substitute for other types of flows, particularly ODA.

22. The free movement of peoples was a right that should be protected. The regulation of such movement must therefore comply with the principles of international humanitarian law and with the human rights of migrants. In that regard, her delegation wished to express its grave concern about the recently issued European Union Return Directive. Now, more than ever, countries needed to join together to demand effective compliance with the obligations emanating from international agreements on human rights and on migration.

23. Her Government was implementing a comprehensive migration policy, as contained in its National Human Development Plan for Migrations, which included programmes designed to protect the rights of migrants, irrespective of their origin and administrative status within the territory of a State. Migration was a direct consequence of exclusive economic models which limited the opportunities for human beings to live in dignity. The new Constitution of Ecuador therefore affirmed the principle of universal citizenship with a view to ending foreign divisions and inequalities, particularly between the countries of the North and the South.

24. **Mr. Dagoh** (Togo) agreed that globalization had important consequences for the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), because globalization and development were intimately linked. Indeed, the current international financial crisis and the spike in food and fuel prices posed serious problems for the achievement of the Goals.

25. The international financial arrangements currently in place increased the vulnerability of developing countries. Furthermore, the austere macroeconomic and privatization policies long prescribed for developing countries as essential for a good investment climate had not produced the expected results. As a result, any economic growth that had occurred had not led to full employment or to the eradication of poverty. Unfortunately, the gloomy world economic forecasts did not bode well for future efforts to tackle development problems.

26. It was the responsibility of the United Nations to promote international cooperation for the development of consistent policies in the context of globalization

and interdependence. The United Nations also needed to ensure the coordination of its development mechanisms and institutions in order to provide sufficient, stable and predictable assistance.

27. It was vital to establish open, equitable, transparent and non-discriminatory financial, monetary and trading systems. Globalization could contribute to poverty eradication and development by helping to remove obstacles to importation and exportation. In that regard, it was important for there to be a successful conclusion to the Doha Round, which should include the removal of protectionist agricultural subsidies by developed countries.

28. In the context of the ongoing financial crisis, it had become increasingly urgent to reform the Bretton Woods institutions in order to ensure increased participation of developing countries in those bodies. The United Nations also had a duty to promote a stronger global partnership for development with a view to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

29. Globalization could provide an acceptable framework for solving development problems if its worst effects were mitigated and its positive aspects reinforced. His delegation therefore called for an inclusive form of globalization with a human face. To that end, the United Nations should ensure that globalization promoted the harmonious and effective functioning of innovative financing mechanisms for the eradication of poverty. It should also ensure that multilateralism provided a context for solidarity, complementarity and partnership for all peoples.

30. **Mr. Bodini** (San Marino) said that the worldwide economic recession would most likely become a global depression whose full dimensions were still unknown. Greater financial solidarity would be required on the part of the international community to offset the worst consequences of that crisis. It was unfortunate therefore that the Bretton Woods institutions had not been able to satisfy all of the urgent requests of Member States in need of financial assistance and that they had also proved unable to monitor the unregulated financial transactions that were the root cause of the crisis. The United Nations itself had not been able to forecast the true scale of the financial crisis. To avoid a repetition of those failures, the General Assembly should be at the centre of the efforts to establish a new

deal, starting with reform of the Bretton Woods institutions.

31. **Mr. Chan Wei Sern** (Singapore) said that, in a globalized world, countries could no longer expect to maintain successful economies by maintaining protectionist policies. Singapore could not rely on its limited domestic market alone for economic growth and had therefore actively attracted foreign trade and investment to remain globally competitive. By adopting such an innovative and pragmatic approach, including policies to supplement the local workforce with workers from abroad, his country had been able to enjoy the benefits of globalization without experiencing the impact of its worst effects. His country was highly appreciative of the contribution that had been made by migrants, who had injected new ideas into its society and had contributed to national growth and development.

32. Foreign nationals were invited to join the workforce of Singapore in a transparent and regulated manner that fully protected their rights. In that connection, outreach activities had been stepped up in recent years to inform migrant workers of their rights and other measures had been implemented to protect migrant workers from abuse, unfair practices and exploitation.

33. **Ms. Isler** (Switzerland) said that there had been a number of important initiatives in recent years to address the nexus between migration and development and she urged the international community to pursue its commitment to identify appropriate ways and means to maximize the developmental benefits of international migration and to minimize its negative aspects.

34. Migrants should be seen as agents of development in their countries of origin and in their countries of destination. The contribution of migrants was not limited to the transfer of money but included other assets such as their newly acquired skills, entrepreneurial activities and social networks. It was the responsibility of Governments to create the conditions that promoted and fostered such assets. At the same time, Governments should promote sustainable development and good governance so that people were not forced into migration or deterred from returning home voluntarily.

35. For its part, the General Assembly should hold high-level dialogues on international migration and development on a regular basis since the United

Nations had the legitimacy to set a globally shared agenda in that field and could provide a platform for States to take stock of the progress made, thereby fostering action as well as policy coherence and synergies. At the same time, the Global Forum on Migration and Development should have a complementary role to play in any such high-level dialogues.

36. **Ms. Strand** (Norway) said that corruption was a major problem that the international community would solve only through international cooperation. To that end, she hoped that the recommendations recently issued by the task force established by Norway on curbing illicit flows would be taken up by the relevant forums in the near future and also highlighted the importance of effective implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. With respect to the latter, however, she stressed that every effort must be made to maintain the carefully balanced compromise that had made the Convention acceptable to all countries.

37. Considerable work would be necessary before a mechanism could be adopted at the third Conference of the States Parties to the Convention in 2009 to assist countries with the implementation of the Convention, identify their needs and provide them with support. All States parties to the Convention should work towards the success of the forthcoming Conference by contributing to the respective intergovernmental working groups on technical assistance, asset recovery and review of implementation. The effective implementation of the Convention was essential to ensure that its provisions on asset recovery and international cooperation functioned as intended.

38. Her delegation strongly supported the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative launched by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Bank and, in that connection, hoped that the new multi-donor trust fund would help to fulfil the objectives of the Initiative.

39. **Ms. Kerelian** (Armenia) said that her country's improved economic performance in recent years had helped to stem emigration. However, that trend was steadily reversing and the current challenging global economic environment was expected to place even greater pressure on the domestic labour market.

40. It was important for Governments to create the socio-economic incentives for migrants to return and

invest their skills and savings in their countries of origin. Governments should also cooperate at the national, regional and local levels to protect the rights of undocumented migrants, who were particularly vulnerable to human rights violations. For its part, her Government was working to promote the return of highly skilled labour to Armenia with a view to achieving a more sustainable form of development. To that end, it had taken steps to achieve a better understanding of the complexities of migration through active participation in the relevant discussions of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and IOM.

41. **Mr. Chitsaz** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that recent challenges, such as the financial and food crises, had demonstrated the complex impact of globalization on all countries. Globalization had significantly reduced the degree of national autonomy in policymaking, particularly in developing countries, while also vastly increasing the importance of non-State actors such as private enterprises and transnational corporations. At the same time, globalization had broadened the range of issues that could be dealt with only on a multilateral basis by the United Nations. Development must therefore be placed at the centre in considering how globalization was managed, rather than being viewed as a by-product of globalization. There should also be greater consistency among national development policies.

42. Unfortunately, the United Nations had not been able to fulfil its development mandate satisfactorily in previous decades, partly owing to the fact that the economic functions provided for in its Charter had largely been transferred to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Those functions should therefore be restored to the United Nations, which should make appropriate recommendations on the development strategies and macroeconomic policies of all its Member States.

43. In addition, the necessary human and financial resources should be provided to enable the relevant United Nations agencies to carry out their tasks pursuant to the Charter. The Development Cooperation Forum of the Economic and Social Council, in particular, should play a central role in international development cooperation. Moreover, the international community, particularly developed countries, should undertake the necessary commitments to development

through the relevant United Nations resolutions and recommendations. Without such commitments, the negative impacts of globalization could outweigh the positive ones, especially in developing countries.

44. The various forums held in recent years by the United Nations clearly demonstrated the international community's intention to deal with international migration and development in a more effective manner. In that connection, he hoped that the second Global Forum on Migration and Development would provide the action-oriented platform needed to foster international cooperation and partnerships.

45. His delegation agreed that the General Assembly should periodically hold high-level debates on international migration and development in order to take stock of the progress made at various levels. The General Assembly was the only United Nations body with the necessary universality and legitimacy to provide the framework for broader agenda-setting and political commitments.

46. His delegation welcomed the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) initiatives to address such issues as the migration of highly skilled workers, the international mobility of students and cultural diversity. It hoped that such initiatives would lead to the international recognition of the rights of migrants.

47. His country attached great importance to international discussions of migration flows and stood ready to engage in cooperation at all levels. Many Iranian migrants were skilled and highly educated people who had played a constructive role in the development of their host countries. It was important therefore that migrants were treated fairly by host countries, that their rights were protected and that they had access to affordable social services.

48. **Ms. Safaa Ahmed** (Iraq) said that combating the legacy of corruption left by the previous regime was a priority of her country's young democracy. The new Constitution had provided for an independent National Integrity Agency to uncover cases of corruption and refer them to the courts for prosecution. Her Government had signed the United Nations Convention against Corruption in March 2008 and in that same month, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), had held a Conference on Good Governance and the Elimination of Corruption whose outcome document established a

multi-agency national anti-corruption organization. It had also established an Office of Financial Supervision and recently committed to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. In September 2008, UNODC and UNDP had launched a five-year programme to fight corruption in Iraq. Her country would continue to promote good governance based on transparency and accountability in fulfilment of its commitments under the International Compact with Iraq.

49. **Mr. Strigelsky** (Belarus) said that globalization would have both a positive and a negative impact on the achievement of the MDGs. In an increasingly globalized world, the economies of all States were vulnerable to the food, energy and financial crises and no State could confront those challenges alone. For that reason, the maintenance of special trade and economic regimes for developing countries, including middle-income countries, would be necessary for their achievement of the Goals.

50. The United Nations must not only build its capacity to address crisis situations, but also ensure the coherence of its actions throughout the system as a whole. In that connection, Belarus supported the measures taken by the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly to help resolve the global financial crisis. The latter's decision to establish an Interactive Panel on the Global Financial Crisis was particularly timely. As the principal United Nations body responsible for the coordination of economic activities, the Economic and Social Council must also be involved in discussions on ways to resolve the financial crisis.

51. The new risks to global energy security posed by the financial crisis could be mitigated through a multilateral dialogue involving representatives of energy-producing and energy-consuming countries. The advantage of such a dialogue was that it would allow appropriate risk mitigation options to be developed within a short period of time. One such opportunity was the initiative put forward by Turkmenistan to convene a high-level international conference in 2009 to discuss the reliable and stable transportation of energy.

52. The development of new and renewable sources of energy and increased access to technologies for their introduction were important for national energy security. Those vital issues should therefore also be

discussed in the context of thematic debates held during the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.

53. **Ms. Stewart** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that over the preceding two decades the global economy's financial architecture had not distributed benefits fairly, and that the current crisis would only exacerbate poverty, underemployment and inequality. As remittances decreased and poverty spread, labour migration would continue to be a core feature of globalization. It was a fundamental principle of ILO that labour was not a commodity, and that workers had a right to freely chosen employment and decent work. Migration should be a matter of choice, not necessity. The previous year's ILO Forum on Decent Work for a Fair Globalization had brought together over 400 participants to exchange views on promoting decent work, and the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, adopted by the June 2008 International Labour Conference, could serve as a framework for action to achieve both an immediate response to the current crises and the long-term goal of achieving a fairer globalization for all.

54. **Mr. Clough** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) said that it was crucial to find ways of ensuring that all people shared in the benefits of globalization while safeguarding them against the risks. UNIDO had a growing programme to encourage transition economies to diversify production and move away from reliance on a small number of primary exports. It also helped countries gain access to global markets by providing assistance on compliance with international standards, quality control and sanitary measures. The international community needed to ensure that transition economies had access to updated and environmentally friendly technologies, in which regard maintaining capital flows such as foreign direct investment were crucial. UNIDO administered projects around the world to phase out ozone-depleting substances, eliminate persistent organic pollutants, and promote energy-efficient technologies with a view to strengthening competitiveness and productivity while reducing carbon emissions. Emphasis was on capacity-building, pro-poor macroeconomic policies, and modernization of agro-industry. UNIDO would continue to support partnerships between government and the private sector to facilitate the integration of economies in transition into the global economy.

55. **Mr. Ben-Shaban** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that, while globalization offered genuine opportunities to developing countries to acquire new capacities and technologies, it also threatened them with economic dependency and instability. The recent crises had revealed the unsound basis of the international financial and trade systems. Efforts by developing countries to diversify their economies should be supported. It should be recognized that privatization and the free market alone would not produce development, and that conditional assistance made it difficult for developing countries to balance international commitments with national priorities.

56. Corruption, bribery and money-laundering deprived developing countries of resources needed for development. The international community could no longer turn a blind eye to the enormous sums of money hidden in money-laundering havens, which were often used by terrorist groups and organized crime. He expressed concern over the low rate of full implementation of the asset recovery provisions of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. He commended the UNODC initiative to eliminate safe havens for the proceeds of corruption, and called on the upcoming third session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention to explore mechanisms to guarantee the identification and tracing of financial flows linked to corruption and the return of illicit assets.

57. Migration should be addressed by enhanced development and economic reforms in the countries of origin. Investments in agriculture, industry and the services sector could reduce unemployment and stem the brain drain. He called for follow-up to the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development with a view to reducing the negative impacts of migration and maximizing the positive role it played in bringing together civilizations.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.